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THE

TREASURY OF DAVID.

THE

TREASURY OF DAVID:

CONTAINING

AN ORIGINAL EXPOSITION OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS;
A COLLECTION OF ILLUSTRATIVE EXTRACTS FROM THE WHOLE RANGE OF LITERATURE;
A SERIES OF HOMILETICAL HINTS UPON ALMOST EVERY VERSE;
AND LISTS OF WRITERS UPON EACH PSALM.

BY

C. H. SPURGEON.

VOL III.

PSALM LIII. TO LXXVIII.

Thirty-first Thousand.

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PREFACE.

THIS volume completes one half of my labour upon this priceless book, and my humble prayer is that I may be spared to conclude the other portion. So uncertain is human life, and so often have men's best designs remained unfinished, that I will press on with all diligence, lest, perhaps, the lamp of life should go out ere the writer has seen by its light the word FINIS at the conclusion of the last verse.

This volume has cost more labour than any other, because upon the larger proportion of the Psalms contained in it no great writers have expatiated at length. Some six or seven of them are specially notable, and have, therefore, been expounded and preached upon on all hands, but the rest remain almost untrodden ground in sacred literature, hence the gathering of extracts has required a wider range of reading and far more laborious research. Where one author writes upon a portion of Scripture, all write, while other passages remain almost untouched. This has driven me very much more to the Latin authors, and in them to a vein of exposition very little worked in these days. The neglect of these voluminous expositors is, however, not very censurable, for as a rule the authors are rather heavy than weighty. "Art is long and life is short," hence I found myself unequal to the unaided accomplishment of my task, and I have had to call in the aid of my excellent friend Mr. Gracey, the accomplished classical tutor of "the Pastors' College," to assist me in the work of winnowing the enormous heaps of Latin comments. Huge folios, full of dreary wordspinning, yield here and there a few goodly grains, and these, I trust, will be valuable enough to my readers to repay my coadjutor and myself for our pains. For the selection of extracts I alone am responsible, for the accuracy of the translations we are jointly accountable. The reader will note that not without much expense of money, as well as toil, he has here furnished to his hand the pith of Venema, Le Blanc, Lorinus, Gerhohus, Musculus, Martin Geier, Mollerus, and Simon de Muis; with occasional notes from Vitringa, Jansenius, Savonarola, Vatablus, Turrecremata, Marloratus, Palanterius Theodoret, and others, as they were judged worthy of insertion. I can truly say that I have never flinched from a difficulty, or spared exertion in order to make the work as complete as it lay

in my power to render it, either by my own endeavours or the help of others. My faithful amanuensis, Mr. Keys, has been spared to me, and has been a continual visitor at the British Museum, Lambeth Palace, Dr. Williams' Museum, and Sion College; and many have been the courtesies which, despite differences of creed, I have received in his person from those who are in authority in those treasures of literature; for all which I would now record my hearty thanks.

No object has been before me but that of serving the church and glorifying God by doing this work right thoroughly. I cannot hope to be remunerated pecuniarily; if only the bare outlay be met I shall be well content, the rest is an offering to the best of Masters, whose word is meat and drink to those who study it. The enjoyment of the work is more than sufficient reward, and the hope of helping my brethren in their biblical studies is very sweet to me.

The late increase of wages to printers, and the rise both in paper and binding, may compel an advance in the very low price charged for these volumes hitherto, but this shall not be made unless it becomes absolutely necessary to screen me from loss. As a larger sale will secure a return of my outlay, the matter is mainly in the hands of the public. Volume I. being now in the third edition, and the second edition of Volume II. being upon the press, I am led to hope that the present volume will also meet with a large and rapid sale; and if so, the old price may suffice to cover the outlay.

My venerable friend, Mr. George Rogers, has furnished me with many hints for the notes to village preachers, and it is hoped that this portion of the work has been so improved that it will not be the least useful part of it. Testimonies received lead to the belief that in the two former volumes numerous students have found help in that department.

There is no need to multiply words in this preface, but it is incumbent upon me to bless the Lord for help given, help daily and hourly sought while I have been occupied in this service; and it is also on my heart to ask a favourable mention of my volumes among their friends from those who kindly appreciate them.

C. H. Spurgeon

Clapham, March 1872.

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PSALM LIII.

TITLE.—To the Chief Musician.—*If the leader of the choir is privileged to sing the jubilates of divine grace, he must not disdain to chant the miserere of human depravity. This is the second time he has had the same Psalm entrusted to him* (see Psalm xiv.), *and he must, therefore, be the more careful in singing it* Upon Mahalath. *Here the tune is chosen for the musician, probably some mournfully solemn air; or perhaps a musical instrument is here indicated, and the master of the choir is requested to make it the prominent instrument in the orchestra; at any rate, this is a direction not found in the former copy of the Psalm, and seems to call for greater care. The word* "Mahalath" *appears to signify, in some forms of it,* "*disease,*" *and truly this Psalm is* THE SONG OF MAN'S DISEASE—*the mortal, hereditary taint of sin.* Maschil. *This is a second additional note not found in Psalm* xiv., *indicating that double attention is to be given to this most instructive song.* A Psalm of David. *It is not a copy of the fourteenth Psalm, emended and revised by a foreign hand; it is another edition by the same author, emphasised in certain parts, and re-written for another purpose.*

SUBJECT.—*The evil nature of man is here brought before our view a second time, in almost the same inspired words. All repetitions are not vain repetitions. We are slow to learn, and need line upon line. David after a long life, found men no better than they were in his youth. Holy Writ never repeats itself needlessly, there is good cause for the second copy of this Psalm; let us read it with more profound attention than before. If our age has advanced from fourteen to fifty-three, we shall find the doctrine of this Psalm more evident than in our youth.*

[*The reader is requested to peruse Psalm XIV., "Treasury of David," Vol. I.*]

EXPOSITION.

THE fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: *there is* none that doeth good.

2 God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were *any* that did understand, that did seek God.

3 Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; *there is* none that doeth good, no, not one.

4 Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people *as* they eat bread: they have not called upon God.

5 There were they in great fear, *where* no fear was: for God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth *against* thee: thou hast put *them* to shame, because God hath despised them.

6 Oh that the salvation of Israel *were come* out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, *and* Israel shall be glad.

1. "*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.*" And this he does because he is a fool. Being a fool he speaks according to his nature; being a great fool he meddles with a great subject, and comes to a wild conclusion. The atheist is, morally as well as mentally, a fool, a fool in the heart as well as in the head; a fool in morals as well as in philosophy. With the denial of God as a starting point, we may well conclude that the fool's progress is a rapid, riotous, raving, ruinous one. He who begins at impiety is ready for anything. "*No God*," being interpreted, means no law, no order, no restraint to lust, no limit to passion. Who but a fool would be of this mind? What a Bedlam, or rather what an Aceldama, would the world become if such lawless principles came to be universal! He who heartily entertains an irreligious spirit, and follows it out to its legitimate issues is a son of Belial, dangerous to the commonwealth, irrational and despicable. Every natural man is, more or less a denier of God. Practical atheism is the religion of the race. "*Corrupt are they.*" They are rotten. It is idle to compliment them as sincere doubters, and amiable thinkers—they are putrid. There is too much dainty dealing nowadays with atheism; it is not a harmless error, it is an offensive, putrid sin, and righteous men should look upon it in that light. All men being more or less atheistic in spirit, are also in that degree corrupt; their heart is foul, their moral nature is decayed. "*And have done abominable iniquity.*" Bad principles soon lead to bad lives. One does not find virtue promoted by the example of your Voltaires and Tom Paines. Those who talk so abominably as to deny their Maker will act abominably when it serves their turn. It is the abounding denial and forgetfulness of God among men which is the source of the unrighteousness and crime which we see around us. If all men are not outwardly vicious it is to be accounted for by the power of other and better principles, but left to itself the "No God" spirit so universal in mankind would produce nothing but the most loathsome actions. "*There is none that doeth good.*" The one typical fool is reproduced in the whole race; without a single exception men have forgotten the right way. This accusation twice made in the Psalm, and repeated a third time by the inspired apostle Paul, is an indictment most solemn and sweeping, but he who makes it cannot err, he knows what is in man; neither will he lay more to man's charge than he can prove.

2. "*God looked down from heaven upon the children of men.*" He did so in ages past, and he has continued his steadfast gaze from his all-surveying observatory. "*To see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God.*" Had there been one understanding man, one true lover of his God, the divine eye would have discovered him. Those pure heathens and admirable savages that men talk so much of, do not appear to have been visible to the eye of Omniscience, the fact being that they live nowhere but in the realm of fiction. The Lord did not look for great grace, but only for sincerity and right desire, but these he found not. He saw all nations, and all men in all nations, and all hearts in all men, and all motions of all hearts, but he saw neither a clear head nor a clean heart among them all. Where God's eyes see no favourable sign we may rest assured there is none.

3. "*Every one of them is gone back.*" The whole mass of manhood, all of it, is gone back. In the fourteenth Psalm it was said to turn aside, which was bad enough, but here it is described as running in a diametrically opposite direction. The life of unregenerate manhood is in direct defiance of the law of God, not merely apart from it but opposed to it. "*They are altogether become filthy.*" The whole lump is soured with an evil leaven, fouled with an all-pervading pollution, made rank with general putrefaction. Thus, in God's sight, our atheistic nature is not the pardonable thing that we think it to be. Errors as to God are not the mild diseases which some account them, they are abominable evils. Fair is the world to blind eyes, but to the all-seeing Jehovah it is otherwise. "*There is none that doeth good, no, not one.*" How could there be, when the whole mass was leavened with so evil a leaven? This puts an end

to the fictions of the innocent savage, the lone patriarch, "the Indian whose untutored mind," etc. Pope's verse—

> "Father of all, in every age,
> In every clime adored,
> By saint, by savage, or by sage,
> Jehovah, Jove, or Lord,"

evaporates in smoke. The fallen race of man, left to its own energy, has not produced a single lover of God or doer of holiness, nor will it ever do so. Grace must interpose, or not one specimen of humanity will be found to follow after the good and true. This is God's verdict after looking down upon the race. Who shall gainsay it?

4. "*Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge?*" They have no wisdom, certainly, but even so common a thing as knowledge might have restrained them. Can they not see that there is a God? that sin is an evil thing? that persecution recoils upon a man's own head? Are they such utter fools as not to know that they are their own enemies, and are ruining themselves? "*Who eat up my people as they eat bread.*" Do they not see that such food will be hard to digest, and will bring on them a horrible vomit when God deals with them in justice? Can they imagine that the Lord will allow them to devour his people with impunity? They must be insane indeed. "*They have not called upon God.*" They carry on their cruel enterprises against the saints, and use every means but that which is essential to success in every case, namely, the invocation of God. In this respect persecutors are rather more consistent than Pharisees who devoured widows' houses, and prayed too. The natural man, like Ishmael, loves not the spiritual seed, is very jealous of it, and would fain destroy it, because it is beloved of God; yet the natural man does not seek after the like favour from God. The carnal mind envies those who obtain mercy, and yet it will not seek mercy itself. It plays the dog in the manger. Sinners will out of a malicious jealousy devour those who pray, but yet they will not pray themselves.

5. "*There were they in great fear, where no fear was.*" David sees the end of the ungodly, and the ultimate triumph of the spiritual seed. The rebellious march in fury against the gracious, but suddenly they are seized with a causeless panic. The once fearless boasters tremble like the leaves of the aspen, frightened at their own shadows. In this sentence and this verse, this Psalm differs much from the fourteenth. It is evidently expressive of a higher state of realisation in the poet, he emphasises the truth by stronger expressions. Without cause the wicked are alarmed. He who denies God is at bottom a coward, and in his infidelity he is like the boy in the churchyard who "whistles to keep his courage up." "*For God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth against thee.*" When the wicked see the destruction of their fellows they may well quail. Mighty were the hosts which besieged Zion, but they were defeated, and their unburied carcasses proved the prowess of the God whose being they dared to deny. "*Thou hast put them to shame, because God hath despised them.*" God's people may well look with derision upon their enemies since they are the objects of divine contempt. They scoff at us, but we may with far greater reason laugh them to scorn, because the Lord our God considers them as less than nothing and vanity.

6. "*Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion.*" Would God the final battle were well over. When will the Lord avenge his own elect? When will the long oppression of the saints come to its close, and glory crown their heads? The word "*salvation*" is in the plural, to show its greatness "*When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.*" Inasmuch as the yoke has been heavy, and the bondage cruel, the liberty will be gladsome, and the triumph joyous. The second advent and the restoration of Israel are our hope and expectation.

We have attempted to throw into rhyme the last two verses of this Psalm:—

The foes of Zion quake for fright,
  Where no fear was they quail;
For well they know that sword of might
  Which cuts through coats of mail.

The Lord of old defiled their shields,
  And all their spears he scorn'd;
Their bones lay scatter'd o'er the fields,
  Unburied and unmourn'd.

Let Zion's foes be filled with shame;
  Her sons are bless'd of God;
Though scoffers now despise their name,
  The Lord shall break the rod.

Oh! would our God to Zion turn,
  God with salvation clad;
Then Judah's harps should music learn,
  And Israel be glad.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—Probably the two Psalms *refer to different periods;* the fourteenth to the earlier portion of the world, or of Jewish history; the fifty-third to a later, perhaps a still future time. Jehovah, through Christ, is frequently said to turn to the world to see what its condition is, and always with the same result. "All flesh had corrupted its way" in the days of Noah, and, "when the Son of Man cometh" again, it is intimated that he will scarcely "find faith on the earth." The two Psalms also *apply to different persons.* The former refers to the enemies of God, who tremble when his presence is made known; "*they are in great fear,*" because vengeance is about to be inflicted on them for their sins. Here the Supreme Being is called Jehovah. In the fifty-third Psalm the interests of God's people are principally kept in view. The ungodly are regarded as plotting against the righteous, and it is in this relation their case is considered. The fear that was just and reasonable in the fourteenth Psalm, because it concerned the unrighteous under a sense of impending judgment, is said to be unfounded in the fifty-third, because God was in the midst of his people, "scattering the bones of their enemies," and showing himself, not as Jehovah, but as the Eloheim of his redeemed children. The fourteenth Psalm contemplates judgment; the fifty-third deliverance; and thus, though seemingly alike, a different lesson is conveyed in each.

The Psalm, then, descriptive of the universal and continuous corruption of man's nature, very properly occupies an introductory place in a series intended to represent the enemies of Messiah, who oppose his church during his absence, and who are to attempt to resist his power when he comes again. Before entering upon an examination of the character of these opponents, this Psalm teaches that, until changed by grace, all are gone astray; "there is none righteous, no, not one," and that for all there is but one remedy, "the Deliverer coming out of Zion, who shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."—*R. H. Ryland, M.A., in "The Psalms restored to Messiah,"* 1853.

Whole Psalm.—The state of earth ought to be deeply felt by us. The world lying in wickedness should occupy much of our thoughts. The enormous guilt, the inconceivable pollution, the ineffably provoking Atheism of this fallen province of God's dominion, might be a theme for our ceaseless meditation and mourning. To impress it the more on us, therefore, the Psalm repeats what has been already sung in Psalm xiv. It is the same Psalm, with only a

few words varied; it is "line upon line, precept upon precept;" the harp's most melancholy, most dismal notes again sounded in our ear. Not that the Lord would detain us always, or disproportionately long, amid scenes of sadness; for elsewhere he repeats in like manner that most triumphant melody, Psalm lx. 6—12; cviii. 6—13; but it is good to return now and then to the open field on which we all were found, cast out in loathsome degradation. —*Andrew A Bonar, in "Christ and his Church in the Book of Psalms,"* 1859.

Whole Psalm.—A second edition of the fourteenth Psalm, with variations more or less important, in each verse. That either of these compositions is an incorrect copy of the other is highly improbable, because two such copies of the same Psalm would not have been retained in the collection, and because the variations are too uniform, consistent, and significant, to be the work of chance or mere traditional corruption. That the changes were deliberately made by a later writer is improbable, because such a liberty would hardly have been taken with a Psalm of David, and because the later form, in that case, would either have been excluded from the Psalter or substituted for the first form, or immediately connected with it.

The only satisfactory hypothesis is, that the original author afterwards re-wrote it, with such modifications as were necessary to bring out certain points distinctly, but without any intention to supersede the use of the original composition, which therefore still retains its place in the collection. This supposition is confirmed by the titles, which ascribe both Psalms to David. . . . As a general fact, it may be stated, that the variations in the Psalm before us are such as render the expression stronger, bolder, and in one or two cases more obscure and difficult.—*J. A. Alexander*, 1850.

Whole Psalm.—This Psalm is a variation of Psalm xiv. In each of these two Psalms the *name* of God occurs seven times. In Psalm xiv. it is three times *Elohim*, and four times *Jehovah;* in the present Psalm it is seven times *Elohim.—Christopher Wordsworth*, 1868.

Whole Psalm.—God, in this Psalm, "speaketh twice," for this is the same almost verbatim with the fourteenth Psalm. The scope of it is to convince us of our sins, to set us a-blushing, and to set us a-trembling because of them: there is need of "line upon line" to this purpose. God, by the psalmist, here shows—

I. The *fact* of sin. God is a witness to it. He looks down from heaven and sees all the sinfulness of men's hearts and lives. All this is open and naked before him.

II. The *fault* of sin. It is iniquity (verses 1, 4); it is an unrighteous thing; it is that in which there is no good (verses 1, 3); it is going back from God (verse 3).

III. The *fountain* of sin. How comes it that men are so bad? Surely, it is because there is no fear of God before their eyes; they say in their hearts, *there is no God* at all to call us to account, none that we need to stand in awe of. Men's bad practices flow from their bad principles.

IV. The *folly* of sin. He is a *fool* (in the account of God, whose judgment we are sure is right) who harbours such corrupt thoughts. The "workers of iniquity," whatever they pretend to, "have no knowledge;" they may truly be said to know nothing that do not know God. Verse 4.

V. The *filthiness* of sin. Sinners are "corrupt" (verse 1); their nature is vitiated and spoiled; their iniquity is "abominable;" it is odious to the holy God, and renders them so; whereas, otherwise he "hates nothing that he has made." What neatness soever proud sinners pretend to, it is certain that wickedness is the greatest nastiness in the world.

VI. The *fruit* of sin. See to what a degree of barbarity it brings men at last! See their cruelty to their brethren! They "eat them up as they eat bread." As if they had not only become beasts, but beasts of prey. See their contempt of God at the same time—they have not called upon him, but scorn to be beholden to him.

VII. The *fear and shame* that attends sin (verse 5). "There were they in great fear" who had made God their enemy; their own guilty consciences frightened them and filled them with horror. This enables the virgin, the daughter of Zion, to put them to shame and expose them, "because God hath despised them."

VIII. The *faith* of the saints, and their hope and power touching this great evil (verse 6). There will come a Saviour, a great salvation, a salvation from sin. O that it might be hastened! for it will bring in glorious and joyful times. There were those in the Old Testament times that looked and hoped, that prayed and waited for this redemption. Such salvations were often wrought, and all typical of the everlasting triumphs of the glorious church.—*Condensed from Matthew Henry*, 1662—1714.

Verse 1.—"*The fool hath said in his heart*," etc. It is in his heart he says this; this is the secret desire of every unconverted bosom. If the breast of God were within the reach of men, it would be stabbed a million of times in one moment. When God was manifest in the flesh, he was altogether lovely; he did no sin; he went about continually doing good: and yet they took him and hung him on a tree; they mocked him and spat upon him. And this is the way men would do with God again. Learn—1st. The fearful depravity of your heart. I venture to say there is not an unconverted man present, who has the most distant idea of the monstrous wickedness that is now within his breast. Stop till you are in hell, and it will break out unrestrained. But still let me tell you what it is—you have a heart that would kill God if you could. If the bosom of God were now within your reach, and one blow would rid the universe of God, you have a heart fit to do the deed. 2nd. The amazing love of Christ—"While we were enemies, Christ died for us."—*Robert Murray M'Cheyne*, 1813—1843.

Verse 1.—"*There is no God.*" אין is properly a noun, and means nonentity, or non-existence: "nothing of God," or "no such thing as God." It cannot be explained as a wish—"No God!" *i.e.*, O that there were no God!—because אין in usage always includes the substantive verb, and denies the existence, or at least the presence, of the person or thing to which it is prefixed. This is also clear from the use of the same word in the last clause, where its sense is unambiguous.—*J. A. Alexander on Psalm XIV.*

Verse 1.—"*There is no God.*" Thus denying the agency of Providence, for the word *Elohim*, here translated *God*, means *judge* (compare Exodus xxii. 28), and has reference not to the *essence*, but to the *providence* of the Deity.—*Daniel Cresswell*, 1776—1844.

Verse 1.—It is to be noted that Scripture saith, "The fool hath *said* in his heart," and not "*thought* in his heart;" that is to say, he doth not so fully think it in judgment, as he hath a good will to be of that belief; for seeing that it makes not for him that there should be a God, he doth seek by all means accordingly to persuade and resolve himself, and studies to affirm, prove, and verify it to himself as some theme or position, all which labour, notwithstanding that sparkle of our creation light, whereby men acknowledge a Deity, burneth still within; and in vain doth he strive utterly to alienate it or put it out, so that it is out of the corruption of his heart and will, and not out of the natural apprehension of his brain and conceit, that he doth set down his opinion, as the comical poet saith, "Then came my mind to be of my opinion," as if himself and his mind had been two diverse things; therefore, the atheist hath rather said, and held it in his heart, than thought or believed in his heart that there is no God.—*Francis Bacon* (1560—1626), *in* "*Thoughts on Holy Scripture.*"

Verse 2.—"*That did seek God.*" Although all things are full of God, yet is he to be *sought for* of godly men, by reason of the darkness which compasseth our minds through original sin. For both the flesh, and the senses, and earthly

affections do hinder us from knowing of him, yea, though he be present.—*Peter Martyr*, 1500—1562.

Verses 2, 3.—Their sin is described in gradation. They do *not understand*, because a true knowledge of things divine forms the basis of proper conduct towards God; they do *not ask for God*, because they only care for him whose clear and sure insight apprehends him as their highest possession; they are *gone aside*, because he who cares not for him is sure to get estranged from him, and to deviate from his paths; and they are *altogether become filthy* (*i.e.*, worthless), because man's proper strength and fitness for virtue must well from the fountain of communion with God.—*Augustus F. Tholuck*, 1856.

Verse 3.—"*They are altogether become filthy.*" נֶאֱלָחוּ *neelachu.* They are become *sour and rancid;* a metaphor taken from milk that has fermented and turned sour, rancid, and worthless.—*Adam Clarke*, 1760—1832.

Verse 3 (*second clause*).—The word נֶאֱלָחוּ, rendered "*they are become filthy*," might be read, *they have become rotten or putrid.*—*John Morison*, 1829.

Verse 3 (*last clause*).—Evil men are not only guilty of sins of commission, having done abominable iniquity, but they are guilty of many sins of omission. In fact, they have never done one holy act. They may be moral, decent, amiable, they may belong to the church; but "*there is none that doeth good, no not one.*" —*William S. Plumer*, 1867.

Verse 4.—"*Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge?*" Conscience is a means to curb and restrain, control and rebuke corrupt nature, and the swelling forms of it. It is not there as a native inhabitant, but as a garrison planted in a rebellious town by the great Governor of the world, to keep the rebellion of the inhabitants within compass, who else would break forth into present confusion. David, speaking of the corruption of man by nature, after this question, Whether there be not some knowledge to discover their evil doings to them? yes, says he, "*Have they no knowledge, who eat up my people as bread?*" Yes; and therefore (verse 5) "*They are often in fear,*" God having placed this there to overcome them with fear; and by that to restrain them from many outrages against God's people, whom in their desires, and sometimes practice, they eat up as bread. Therefore this knowledge is put in as a bridle to corrupt nature, as a hook was put into Sennacherib's nostrils (Isa. xxxvii. 29) to rule and tame men, and overcome them with fear. If they had no knowledge they would eat up one another, and the church, as bread; but there is their fear, says he, that is, thence it comes to pass they are kept in awe.—*Thomas Goodwin*, 1600—1679.

Verse 4.—"*Who eat up my people as they eat bread.*" *C'est, n'en font non plus de conscience, que de manger un morceau de pain.* [That is, they have no more scruple in doing this than in eating a morsel of bread.]—*French Margin.*

Verse 4.—"*My people.*" David may call the serious *his people*, because of his regard for them, and because they were his supporters and friends. They adhered to him in all his afflictions. ["Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Ruth i. 16.]—*Benjamin Boothroyd*, —1836.

Verse 5.—"*There were they in great fear, where no fear was.*" There is a fond and superstitious fear, when men are afraid of their shadows, as Pisander was afraid of meeting his own soul; and Antenor would never go forth of the doors, but either in a coach closed upon all sides, or with a target borne over his head, fearing, I guess, lest the sky should fall down upon it, according to that in the Psalm, "*They fear where no fear is.*"—*John King*, 1559—1621.

Verse 5.—"*There were they in great fear, where no fear was.*" Behold how fearful a hell a wounded conscience is! For why is Cain afraid to be killed, seeing there is none living to perform it, but his father and mother, and perhaps some women children which the Scripture nameth not? It is God's just judgment, that they that will not fear the Lord who is only to be feared,

should stand in fear of them who are justly no cause of fear. He that lately feared not to kill his brother, is now made a terror to himself. Hereby also we may consider what is the repentance of the wicked; they see perhaps the fault together with the punishment, but they admit the fault and lament the punishment.—*Nicholas Gibbens*, 1602.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

[See the Hints on Psalm XIV.]

Verse 1.—The fool's inside and outside.

Verse 1.—I. The folly of atheism. He who says there is no God is a fool. 1. No reason for the assertion. 2. All reason against it. II. The seat of atheism is the heart; it is a moral unbelief not an intellectual, the language of the will not of the understanding. III. Cause of atheism. 1. Loving evil. 2. Hating good.—*G. R.*

Verse 2.—I. God has not left the world to itself. II. He takes particular notice of all that is in it. III. The only thing he values in it is the knowledge of himself.—*G. R.*

Verse 4.—How far knowledge is and is not a restraint upon ungodliness.

Verse 4.—It is a sin not to call upon God. I. What is it to call upon God? Three things required in it. 1. A drawing near to him. 2. A speaking to him. 1 Sam. i. 12, 13. 3. A praying to him. II. How should we call upon God? 1. Reverently, considering (1) God's holiness and greatness; (2) our own sin and weakness. Gen. xviii. 27. 2. Understandingly. 1 Cor. xiv. 15. (1) Of what we ask. (2) Of whom we ask it. 3. Submissively. 4. Believingly. Mark xi. 24; James i 6. 5. Sincerely. James iv. 3. 6. Constantly. (1) So as to be always in a praying frame. (2) So as to take all occasions of pouring forth our souls in prayer to God. (3) So as to let no day slip without prayer. III. How it appears to be a sin not to call upon God. 1. He hath commanded it. Isa. lv. 6; 1 Tim. ii. viii. 2. Because praying is one of the principal parts of worship we owe to God. IV. Who are guilty of this sin? 1. All who pray to any one else but God. 2. All who neglect either public, private, or family prayer. 3. All who pray, but not aright.—*William Beveridge* (1636—1708), *in* "*Thesaurus Theoligicus.*"

Verse 5.—I. What persecutors are to themselves—their own tormentors, full even of groundless fears. II. What they are to one another—though in concert here, their bones are scattered hereafter. III. What they are to those whom they persecute—made ashamed before them. IV. What they are to God—a contempt and derision.—*G. R.*

Verse 6.—I. There is salvation for Israel. II. That salvation is in Zion. III. Their salvation remains there when they are banished from it. IV. Their joy becomes greater when they return.—*G. R.*

PSALM LIV.

TITLE.—To the Chief Musician on Neginoth. *The music was to be that of stringed instruments. Variety is to be studied in our tunes, and in all other matters relating to sacred song. Monotony is often the death of congregational praise. Providence is varied, and so should our recording songs be.* Maschil. *We are to learn and to teach by what we sing. Edification must not be divorced from psalmody.* A Psalm of David. *David's productions were as plentiful as they are profitable. His varied life was for our benefit, for from it we derive these hymns, which at this hour are as fresh and as precious as when he wrote them.* When the Ziphims came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us? *To curry favour with Saul they were guilty of gross inhospitality. What cared they what innocent blood was shed so that they earned the graceless monarch's smile! David came quietly among them, hoping for a little rest in his many flights, but they descried him in his solitary abode, and betrayed him. He turns to God in prayer, and so strong was his faith that he soon sang himself into delightful serenity.*

DIVISIONS.—*From verse* 1 *to* 3, *where the Selah makes a pause for us, the psalmist pleads with God, and then in the rest of the song, laying aside all doubt, he chants a hymn of joyful triumph. The vigour of faith is the death of anxiety, and the birth of security.*

EXPOSITION.

SAVE me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength.

2 Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.

3 For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Selah.

1. "*Save me, O God.*" Thou art my Saviour; all around me are my foes and their eager helpers. No shelter is permitted me. Every land rejects me and denies me rest. But thou, O God, wilt give me refuge, and deliver me from all my enemies. "*By thy name,*" by thy great and glorious nature. Employ all thine attributes for me. Let every one of the perfections which are blended in thy divine name work for me. Is not thine honour pledged for my defence? "*And judge me by thy strength.*" Render justice to me, for none else will or can. Thou canst give me efficient justice, and right my wrongs by thine omnipotence. We dare not appeal to God in a bad cause, but when we know that we can fearlessly carry our cause before his justice we may well commit it to his power.

2. "*Hear my prayer, O God.*" This has ever been the defence of saints. As long as God hath an open ear we cannot be shut up in trouble. All other weapons may be useless, but all-prayer is evermore available. No enemy can spike this gun. "*Give ear to the words of my mouth.*" Vocal prayer helps the supplicant, and we keep our minds more fully awake when we can use our tongues as well as our hearts. But what is prayer if God hear not? It is all one whether we babble nonsense or plead arguments if our God grant us not a hearing. When his case had become dangerous, David could not afford to pray out of mere custom, he must succeed in his pleadings, or become the prey of his adversary.

3. "*For strangers are risen up against me.*" Those who had no cause for ill-will had gone against him; persons to whom he could have given no offence, for they were strangers to him. They were aliens to his God also, and should these be allowed to worry and destroy him. A child may well complain to his

father when strangers come in to molest him? What right have they to interfere? Let them leave off meddling and mind their own concerns. "*And oppressors seek after my soul.*" Saul, that persecuting tyrant, had stamped his own image on many more. Kings generally coin their own likeness. He led the way, and others followed seeking David's soul, his blood, his life, his very existence. Cruel and intense were they in their malice, they would utterly crush the good man; no half measures would content them. "*They have not set God before them.*" They had no more regard for right and justice than if they knew no God, or cared for none. Had they regarded God they would not have betrayed the innocent to be hunted down like a poor harmless stag. David felt that atheism lay at the bottom of the enmity which pursued him. Good men are hated for God's sake, and this is a good plea for them to urge in prayer. "*Selah.*" As if he said, "Enough of this, let us pause." He is out of breath with indignation. A sense of wrong bids him suspend the music awhile. It may also be observed, that more pauses would, as a rule, improve our devotions: we are usually too much in a hurry: a little more holy meditation would make our words more suitable and our emotions more fervent.

4 Behold, God *is* mine helper: the Lord *is* with them that uphold my soul.

5 He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in thy truth.

6 I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O LORD; for *it is* good.

7 For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen *his desire* upon mine enemies.

4. "*Behold, God is mine helper.*" He saw enemies everywhere, and now to his joy as he looks upon the band of his defenders he sees one whose aid is better than all the help of men; he is overwhelmed with joy at recognising his divine champion, and cries, "*Behold.*" And is not this a theme for pious exultation in all time, that the great God protects us, his own people: what matters the number or violence of our foes when HE uplifts the shield of his omnipotence to guard us, and the sword of his power to aid us? Little care we for the defiance of the foe while we have the defence of God. "*The Lord is with them that uphold my soul.*" The reigning Lord, the great Adonai is in the camp of my defenders. Here was a greater champion than any of the three mighties, or than all the valiant men who chose David for their captain. The psalmist was very confident, he felt so thoroughly that his heart was on the Lord's side that he was sure God was on *his* side. He asked in the first verse for deliverance, and here he returns thanks for upholding: while we are seeking one mercy which we have not, we must not be unmindful of another which we have. It is a great mercy to have some friends left us, but a greater mercy still to see the Lord among them, for like so many cyphers our friends stand for nothing till the Lord sets himself as a great unit in the front of them.

5. "*He shall reward evil unto mine enemies.*" They worked for evil, and they shall have their wages. It cannot be that malice should go unavenged. It were cruelty to the good to be lenient to their persecutors. It is appointed, and so it must ever be, that those who shoot upward the arrows of malice shall find them fall upon themselves. The recoil of their own gun has often killed oppressors. "*Cut them off in thy truth.*" Not in ferocious revenge is this spoken, but as an Amen to the sure sentence of the just Judge. Let the veracity of thy threatenings be placed beyond dispute, the decree is right and just, let it be fulfilled. It is not a private desire, but the solemn utterance of a military man, a grossly injured man, a public leader destined to be a monarch, and a man well trained in the school of Moses, whose law ordains eye for eye and tooth for tooth.

6. "*I will freely sacrifice unto thee.*" Spontaneously will I bring my free will offerings. So certain is he of deliverance that he offers a vow by anticipation. His overflowing gratitude would load the altars of God with victims cheerfully presented. The more we receive, the more we ought to render. The spontaneousness of our gifts is a great element in their acceptance; the Lord loveth a cheerful giver. "*I will praise thy name, O Lord.*" As if no amount of sacrifice could express his joyful feelings, he resolves to be much in vocal thanksgiving. The name which he invoked in prayer (verse 1), he will now magnify in praise. Note how roundly he brings it out: "*O Jehovah.*" This is ever the grand name of the revealed God of Israel, a name which awakens the sublimest sentiments, and so nourishes the most acceptable praise. None can praise the Lord so well as those who have tried and proved the preciousness of his name in seasons of adversity. The psalmist adds, "*for it is good,*" and surely we may read this with a double nominative, God's name is good, and so is his praise. It is of great use to our souls to be much in praise; we are never so holy or so happy as when our adoration of God abounds. Praise is good in itself, good to us, and good to all around us. If David's enemies are described in the third verse as not setting God before them, he here declares that he is of a different mind from them, for he resolves to have the Lord in perpetual remembrance in his sacrifices and praises.

7. "*For he hath delivered me out of all trouble.*" Up to that time deliverance had come, and for that danger also he felt that rescue was near. David lived a life of dangers and hair-breadth 'scapes, yet was he always safe. In the retrospect of his very many deliverances he feels that he must praise God, and looking upon the mercy which he sought as though it were already received, he sang this song over it —

> "And a new song is in my mouth,
> To long loved music set,
> *Glory to thee for all the grace*
> *I have not tasted yet.*"

Out of all trouble our covenant God is pledged to bring us, and therefore even now let us uplift the note of triumph unto Jehovah, the faithful preserver of them that put their trust in him. Thus far we have proved his promise good; he changes not, and therefore in all the unknown future he will be equally our guardian and defence, "showing himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." "*And mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.*" He knew that yet he should look on his haughty foes, gazing down on them in triumph as now they looked on him in contempt. He desired this as a matter of justice, and not of personal pique. His righteous soul exulted because he knew that unprovoked and gratuitous malice would meet with a righteous punishment. Could we keep out of our hearts all personal enmity as fully as the psalmist did in this Psalm, we might yet equally feel with him a sacred acquiescence and delight in that divine justice which will save the righteous and overthrow the malicious.

In closing, let us trust that if we are as friendless as this man of God, we may resort to prayer as he did, exercise the like faith, and find ourselves ere long singing the same joyous hymn of praise.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—From the inscription, learn, 1. Particular straits and particular deliveries should be particularly remarked: as David here remembereth the danger he was in by the treachery of the *Ziphims.* 2. Mighty men will find readily more friends in an evil cause, than the godly do find in a good cause: as Saul has the Ziphims to offer their service to his cruelty, when David was in straits. 3. The wicked are very hearty to do an ill turn, and glad to find occasion of it. "*Doth not David,*" say they, "*hide himself with us?*" as if this had been good and blessed news.—*David Dickson* (1583—1662), *in* "*A Brief Explication upon the Psalms.*"

Whole Psalm.—The church has taken a clear view in appointing this as one of the Psalms in commemoration of the passion of Jesus. It is seen with greatest effect as a simple prophecy of Christ. Read thus, it is very plain and intelligible; requiring little more than the first idea to exhibit a perfect correspondence with the life and feelings of the Messiah.—*William Hill Tucker, in* "*The Psalms . . . . with Notes,*" 1840.

Whole Psalm.—In the first three verses, David being sought for by his enemies, prays against them. That was his course, he always began his conflict with God, contending and wrestling with him for a blessing and assistance. He durst not lift up his hands even against the enemies of God (yet what durst not David do?) till he had first lifted them up in humble supplication to the Lord his strength, "Who taught his hands to war, and his fingers to fight." Psalm cxliv. 1. This being done, his courage breaks out like lightning, he doubts not of slaying his thousands and ten thousands. So in the fourth and fifth verses, he becomes his own prophet, promising himself victory. For who can resist him who hath Omnipotence for his second? Or how can any enemy maintain a fight against that captain who hath beforehand defeated and broken their forces by his prayers? assured his conquest before he put on his armour? Then in the last verses, David concludes where he began, thankfully acknowledgeth God's goodness in his deliverance, and the dissipation of his enemies, obliging himself to a return of dutiful affectionate service, in consideration of so great mercies received.—*J. Dolben, in a Thanksgiving Sermon,* 1665.

Whole Psalm.—Blessed Redeemer! give me grace to eye thee, and to call to my recollection thine exercises amidst the false friends and open foes, which in the days of thy flesh surrounded thee. Lord! help me so to consider thee who didst endure such a contradiction of sinners against thyself, that I may not be weary and faint in mind. And while the Ziphims of the present hour harass and distress me, and would deliver my soul up into the hand of the enemy: oh! for grace to be looking unto thee, and deriving strength from thee, that I may discover thy gracious hand delivering me out of all my troubles, and making me more than conqueror in thy strength, and in the power of thy might.—*Robert Hawker, D.D.,* 1753—1827.

Verse 1.—"*Save me, O God!*" As David was at this time placed beyond the reach of human assistance, he must be understood as praying to be saved by the *name and the power of God,* in an emphatical sense, or by these in contradistinction to the usual means of deliverance. Though all help must ultimately come from God, there are ordinary methods by which he generally extends it. When these fail, and every earthly stay is removed, he must then take the work into his own hands. It was in such a situation that David here fled to the saints' last asylum, and sought to be saved by a miracle of divine power.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 1.—"*Judge me by thy strength*," or power, *i.e.*, determine, decide my cause by thy mighty power. Saul, in the cause between him and David, was resolved to end it by force only, and to arbitrate in no other way than by a javelin, a sword, or his forces. The psalmist well knew that Saul, in this respect, would be too hard for him; and therefore applies for protection and justice to one whose power he knew was infinitely superior to his adversaries, and who, he was assured, could and would defend him.—*Samuel Chandler* (1693—1766), *in* "*A Critical History of the Life of David.*"

Verse 2 (*second clause*).—Let "*the words of my mouth*" with which I have defended my cause, be pleasing and acceptable to thee. For in this way can *prayers* and words *of the mouth* be correctly distinguished, unless any one should wish simply to understand by them *prayers uttered by the mouth;* but, as I have said, the phrase is more emphatic.—*Hermann Venema*, 1697—1787.

Verse 3.—"*Strangers:*" aliens to his truth, men who from unbelief have estranged themselves from all lot and portion in his covenant—oppress and persecute.—*William Hill Tucker.*

Verse 3 (*first clause*).—The Chaldee interpreter reads, *proud men*, instead of "*strangers*," a reading which also is found in eight of Kennicott's Codices. So also Psalm lxxxvi. 14.—*William Walford, in* "*The Book of Psalms. A New Translation*," etc., 1837.

Verse 3 (*first clause*).—There is a great mistake made by rendering the word זָרִים (*zarim*) "*strangers.*" The Ziphites surely were Israelites, and not strangers. The fact is this, that word is taken from זָרָה (*zarah*) the primary meaning of which is "to scatter," to "disperse," also "to sift," as grain. Hence it signifies, likewise figuratively, to sift a matter, to investigate, to search out, to trace out. So here David complains of the new and dangerous enemies he had got in the Ziphites, who became Saul's spies. When he pleads, therefore, for deliverance, saying, "Save me, O God," etc., he describes the danger he was in: "*For spies have risen against me.*"—*Benjamin Weiss, in* "*New Translation, Exposition, and Chronological Arrangement of the Psalms*," 1858.

Verse 3.—"*Oppressors seek after my soul;*" *i.e.*, my life at least; my soul also they would destroy, if it lay in their power, as the Papists delivered up John Huss to the devil.—*John Trapp*, 1611—1662.

Verse 3.—"*Selah.*" See "Treasury of David," Vol. I., pp. 25, 29, 346, 382; and Vol. II., pp. 249—252.

Verse 4.—"*Behold*," says he, I produce a certain fact, well-known, demonstrated by a new proof, and worthy of all attention; for the particle *behold*, contains this breadth of meaning.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 4.—Christ sees with the utmost clearness, that God will be his *own* "*helper*," and of them—the disciples and believers—"*that uphold his soul.*" In the same moment, does he foresee the destruction of his enemies. He views, in thought, the armies of Titus, the fall of the Jewish nation, and the dispersion of the remnant. He beholds the avenging hand of God, stretched in fury over the destroyers.—*William Hill Tucker.*

Verse 4 (*second clause*).—Such as take part with the persecuted saints, God will take part with them: "*The Lord is with them that uphold my soul.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verses 4, 5.—He is assured of help to himself and to his friends, and of vengeance to his enemies. Whence learn, 1. Fervent prayer hath readily a swift answer, and sometimes wonderfully swift, even before a man have ended speech, as here David findeth in experience. "*Behold*," saith he, "*God is my helper.*" 2. The sight of faith is very clear, and piercing through all clouds, when God holds forth the light of his Spirit unto it, it can demonstrate God present in an instant; ready to help in greatest straits: "*Behold, God is my helper.*" 3. There is more joy in God's felt presence than grief in felt trouble; for,

"*Behold, God is mine helper*," was more comfortable to David than his friends unkindness, and strangers' malice was grievous.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 5.—"*Cut them off.*" He desires that God would destroy them with a *death-dealing blow*, which is the force the word צְמִית contains; its primitive sense is *to be silent, to keep silence*, whence it is transferred to a stroke penetrating deeply and striking fatally, such as is called a *silent* blow, opposed to a *sounding* one, which is wont to rebound and not pierce deeply.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 6.—"*I will freely sacrifice unto thee.*" He would *sacrifice freely:* by which he does not allude to the circumstance, that sacrifices of thanksgiving were at the option of worshippers, but to the alacrity and cheerfulness with which he would pay his vow when he had escaped his present dangers.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 7.—"*Mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.*" Or, *mine eye hath looked upon mine enemies;* that is, he was able to meet them without terror.—*Samuel Davidson, D.D.*, 1852.

Verse 7.—The reader will note that the words *his desire* are supplied by our translators, and are not in the original text.—*C. H. S.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—In the deliverance of the saints the honour and power of God are concerned. I. Their failure would dishonour both. II. Their salvation glorifies both. III. Both are immutable, therefore we have a sure plea at all times.

Verse 2.—Our main concern in prayer. I. What is meant by God's hearing prayer. II. How we may know that he has done so. III. What is to be done when this is doubtful. IV. What is due to him when the hearing is given.

Verse 3.—Strange trials. I. They are not altogether strange. 1. Not so to God. 2. Not so in the history of the church. 3. Not so to the provisions of grace wherein they are anticipated. II. Wherein they are strange. 1. They reveal God anew. 2. Endear forgotten promises. 3. Train unused graces. 4. Bring new praises, etc.

Verse 3 (*last clause*).—The root of sin: if they remembered his authority they dared not, if they tasted his love they would not, if they were conformed to his nature they could not.

Verse 4.—A theme for wonder. 1. At his unmerited grace, that he should side with *me*. 2. At his gracious power, for who can resist him? 3. At his practical help, for he has upheld my soul.

Verse 6.—We should sacrifice voluntarily, liberally, joyfully, continuously, with pure motive.

Verse 6.—The goodness of praising the good name.

Verse 7 (*first clause*).—The exclamation of the newly-pardoned penitent, the cry of the delivered saint, the song of the ripe Christian, the shout of the glorified believer.

WORK UPON THE FIFTY-FOURTH PSALM.

In CHANDLER'S "*Life of David*," pp. 152—4, there is an Exposition of this Psalm

PSALM LV.

TITLE.—To the Chief Musician on Neginoth.—*Another song to be accompanied by stringed instruments. The strain is at one time mournful, and at another softly sweet. It needed the chief musician's best care to see that the music was expressive of the sentiment.* Maschil. *It is not a mere personal hymn, there is teaching in it for us all, and where our Lord shines through David, his personal type, there is a great deep of meaning.* Of David. *The man of many conditions, much tried and much favoured, persecuted but delivered and exalted, was from experience enabled to write such precious verses in which he sets forth not only the sorrows of common pilgrims, but of the Lord of the way himself.*

SUBJECT.—*It would be idle to fix a time, and find an occasion for this Psalm with any dogmatism. It reads like a song of the time of Absalom and Ahithophel. It was after David had enjoyed peaceful worship* (*verse* 14), *when he was or had just been a dweller in a city* (*verses* 9, 10, 11), *and when he remembered his former roamings in the wilderness. Altogether it seems to us to relate to that mournful era when the King was betrayed by his trusted counsellor. The spiritual eye ever and anon sees the Son of David and Judas, and the chief priests appearing and disappearing upon the glowing canvas of the Psalm.*

DIVISIONS.—*From verses* 1 *to* 8, *the suppliant spreads his case in general before his God; in verses* 9, 10, 11, *he portrays his enemies; in verses* 12—14, *he mentions one special traitor, and cries for vengeance, or foretells it in verse* 15. *From verses* 16 *to* 19 *he consoles himself by prayer and faith; in verses* 20 *and* 21 *he again mentions the deceitful covenant-breaker, and closes with a cheering exhortation to the saints* (*verse* 22), *and a denunciation of destruction upon the wicked and deceitful* (*verse* 23).

EXPOSITION.

GIVE ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication.

2 Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise;

3 Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.

4 My heart is sore pained with me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.

5 Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.

6 And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! *for then* would I fly away, and be at rest.

7 Lo, *then* would I wander far off, *and* remain in the wilderness. Selah.

8 I would hasten my escape from the windy storm *and* tempest.

1. "*Give ear to my prayer, O God.*" The fact is so commonly before us, otherwise we should be surprised to observe how universally and constantly the saints resort to prayer in seasons of distress. From the Great Elder Brother down to the very least of the divine family, all of them delight in prayer. They

run as naturally to the mercy-seat in time of trouble as the little chickens to the hen in the hour of danger. But note well that it is never the bare act of prayer which satisfies the godly, they crave an audience with heaven, and an answer from the throne, and nothing less will content them. "*Hide not thyself from my supplication.*" Do not stop thine ear, or restrain thy hand. When a man saw his neighbour in distress, and deliberately passed him by, he was said to hide himself from him; and the psalmist begs that the Lord would not so treat him. In that dread hour when Jesus bore our sins upon the tree, his Father did hide himself, and this was the most dreadful part of all the Son of David's agony. Well may each of us deprecate such a calamity as that God should refuse to hear our cries.

2. "*Attend unto me, and hear me.*" This is the third time he prays the same prayer. He is in earnest, in deep and bitter earnest. If his God do not hear, he feels that all is over with him. He begs for his God to be a listener and an answerer. "*I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise.*" He gives a loose to his sorrows, permits his mind to rehearse her griefs, and to pour them out in such language as suggests itself at the time, whether it be coherent or not. What a comfort that we may be thus familiar with our God! We may not complain *of* him, but we may complain *to* him. Our rambling thoughts when we are distracted with grief we may bring before him, and that too in utterances rather to be called "*a noise*" than language. He will attend so carefully that he will understand us, and he will often fulfil desires which we ourselves could not have expressed in intelligible words. "Groanings that cannot be uttered," are often prayers which cannot be refused. Our Lord himself used strong cryings and tears, and was heard in that he feared.

3. "*Because of the voice of the enemy.*" The enemy was vocal and voluble enough, and found a voice where his godly victim had nothing better than a "noise." Slander is seldom short of expression, it prates and prattles evermore. Neither David, nor our Lord, nor any of the saints were allowed to escape the attacks of venomous tongues, and this evil was in every case the cause of acute anguish. "*Because of the oppression of the wicked:*" the unjust pressed and oppressed the righteous; like an intolerable burden they crushed them down, and brought them to their knees before the Lord. This is a thrice-told story, and to the end of time it will be true; he that is born after the flesh will persecute him that is born after the Spirit. The great seed of the woman suffered from a bruised heel. "*For they cast iniquity upon me,*" they black me with their sootbags, throw the dust of their lying over me, cast the vitriol of their calumny over me. They endeavour to trip me up, and if I do not fall they say I do. "*And in wrath they hate me.*" With a hearty ill will they detested the holy man. It was no sleeping animosity, but a mortal rancour which reigned in their bosoms. The reader needs not that we show how applicable this is to our Lord.

4. "*My heart is sore pained within me.*" His spirit writhed in agony, like a poor worm; he was mentally as much in pain as a woman in travail physically. His inmost soul was touched; and a wounded spirit who can bear? If this were written when David was attacked by his own favourite son, and ignominiously driven from his capital, he had reason enough for using these expressions "*And the terrors of death are fallen upon me.*" Mortal fears seized him, he felt like one suddenly surrounded with the glooms of the shadow of death, upon whom the eternal night suddenly descends. Within and without he was afflicted, and his chief terror seemed to come from above, for he uses the expression, "Fallen upon me." He gave himself up for lost. He felt that he was as good as dead. The inmost centre of his nature was moved with dismay. Think of our Lord in the garden, with his "soul exceeding sorrowful even unto death," and you have a parallel to the griefs of the psalmist. Perchance, dear reader, if as yet thou hast not trodden this gloomy way, thou wilt do soon; then be sure to mark the footprints of thy Lord in this miry part of the road.

5. "*Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me.*" Like housebreakers these robbers were entering his soul. Like one who feels a fainting fit coming over him, so the oppressed suppliant was falling into a state of terror. His fear was so great as to make him tremble. He did not know what would happen next, or how soon the worst would come. The sly, mysterious whisperings of slander often cause a noble mind more fear than open antagonism; we can be brave against an open foe, but cowardly, plotting conspiracies bewilder and distract us. "*And horror hath overwhelmed me.*" He was as one enveloped in a darkness that might be felt. As Jonah went down into the sea, so did David appear to go down into deeps of horror. He was unmanned, confounded, brought into a hideous state of suspense and mortal apprehension.

6. "*And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.*" If he could not resist as an eagle, he would escape as a dove. Swiftly, and unobserved, on strong, untiring pinions would he hie away from the abodes of slander and wickedness. His love of peace made him sigh for an escape from the scene of strife.

> "O for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
> Some boundless contiguity of shade,
> Where rumour of oppression and deceit
> Might never reach me more."

We are all too apt to utter this vain desire, for vain it is; no wings of doves or eagles could bear us away from the sorrows of a trembling heart. Inward grief knows nothing of place. Moreover, it is cowardly to shun the battle which God would have us fight. We had better face the danger, for we have no armour for our backs. He had need of a swifter conveyance than doves' pinions who would outfly slander; he may be at rest who does not fly, but commends his case to his God. Even the dove of old found no rest till she returned to her ark, and we amid all our sorrow may find rest in Jesus. We need not depart; all will be well if we trust in him.

7. "*Lo, then would I wander far off.*" Yet when David was far off, he sighed to be once more near Jerusalem; thus, in our ill estate we ever think the past to be better than the present. We shall be called to fly far enough away, and perchance we shall be loath to go; we need not indulge vain notions of premature escape from earth. "*And remain in the wilderness.*" He found it none such a dear abode when there, yet resolves now to make it his permanent abode. Had he been condemned to receive his wish he would ere long have felt like Selkirk, in the poet's verse—

> "O solitude, where are the charms
> That sages have found in thy face?
> Better dwell in the midst of alarms
> Than reign in this horrible place."

Our Lord, while free from all idle wishes, found much strength in solitude, and loved the mountain's brow at midnight, and the quiet shade of the olives of Gethsemane. It is better practically to use retirement than pathetically to sigh for it. Yet it is natural, when all men do us wrong, to wish to separate ourselves from their society; nature, however, must yield to grace, and we must endure the contradiction of sinners against ourselves, and not be weary and faint in our minds. "*Selah.*" After such a flight well may the mind rest. When we are going too fast, and giving way too freely to regrets, it is well to cry, "halt," and pause awhile, till more sober thoughts return.

8. "*I would hasten my escape.*" He tried to pause but could not, like a horse which when pulled up slips on a little because of the speed at which he was going. David declares that he would not waste a moment, or stay to bid adieu to his friends, but up and away at once, for fear he should be too late, and because he could bear the clamour of his foes no longer. "*From the windy storm and tempest.*" A storm was brewing, and, like a dove, he would outfly it and reach a calmer region. Swifter than the storm-cloud would he

fly, to avoid the deluge of rain, and the flash of the lightning. Alas! poor soul, no such wings are thine, as yet thou must tarry here and feel the tempest; but be of good cheer, thou shalt stretch thy wings ere long for a bolder flight, heaven shall receive thee, and there thy sorrows shall have a finis of felicity among the birds of paradise.

9 Destroy, O Lord, *and* divide their tongues: for I have seen violence and strife in the city.

10 Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof: mischief also and sorrow *are* in the midst of it.

11 Wickedness *is* in the midst thereof: deceit and guile depart not from her streets.

9. "*Destroy, O Lord.*" Put mine enemies to the rout. Let them be devoured by the sword, since they have unsheathed it against me. How could we expect the exiled monarch to offer any other prayer than this against the rebellious bands of Absalom, and the crafty devices of Ahithophel? "*Divide their tongues.*" Make another Babel in their debates and councils of war. Set them at cross purposes. Divide the pack that the hunted one may escape. The divisions of error are the hope of truth. "*For I have seen violence and strife in the city.*" The rabble and their leaders were plotting and planning, raging and contending against their king, running wild with a thousand mad projects: anarchy had fermented among them, and the king hoped that now it might come to pass that the very lawlessness which had exiled him would create weakness among his foes. Revolution devours its own children. They who are strong through violence, will sooner or later find that their strength is their death. Absalom and Ahithophel may raise the mob, but they cannot so easily rule it, nor so readily settle their own policy as to remain firm friends. The prayer of David was heard, the rebels were soon divided in their councils; Ahithophel went his way to be hanged with a rope, and Absalom to be hanged without one.

10. "*Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof.*" The city, the holy city had become a den of wickedness: conspirators met in the dark, and talked in little knots in the streets even in broad daylight. Meanwhile the country was being roused to revolt, and the traitors without threatened to environ the city, and act in concert with the rebels within. No doubt there was a smothered fire of insurrection which Absalom kindled and fanned, which David perceived with alarm some time before he left Jerusalem; and when he quitted the city it broke out into an open flame. "*Mischief also and sorrow are in the midst of it.*" Unhappy capital to be thus beset by foes, left by her monarch, and filled with all those elements of turbulence which breed evil and trouble. Unhappy king to be thus compelled to see the mischief which he could not avert laying waste the city which he loved so well. There was another King whose many tears watered the rebellious city, and who said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

11. "*Wickedness is in the midst thereof.*" The very heart of the city was base. In her places of authority crime went hand in hand with calamity. All the wilder and more wicked elements were uppermost; the *canaille* were commanders; the scum floated uppermost; justice was at a discount; the population was utterly demoralised; prosperity had vanished and order with it. "*Deceit and guile depart not from her streets.*" In all the places of concourse crafty tongues were busy persuading the people with cozening phrases. Crafty demagogues led the people by the nose. Their good king was defamed in all ways, and when they saw *him* go away, they fell to reviling the governors of their own choosing. The forum was the fortress of fraud, the congress was the convention of cunning. Alas, poor Jerusalem, to b·

thus the victim of sin and shame! Virtue reviled and vice regnant! Her solemn assemblies broken up, her priests fled, her king banished, and troops of reckless villains parading her streets, sunning themselves on her walls, and vomiting their blasphemies in her sacred shrines. Here was cause enough for the sorrow which so plaintively utters itself in these verses.

12 For *it was* not an enemy *that* reproached me; then I could have borne *it:* neither *was it* he that hated me *that* did magnify *himself* against me; then I would have hid myself from him:

13 But *it was* thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance.

14 We took sweet counsel together, *and* walked unto the house of God in company.

12. The reader will do well to observe how accurately the psalmist described his own Psalm when he said, "I mourn in my complaint," or rather "give loose to my thoughts," for he proceeds from one point of his sorrow to another, wandering on like one in a maze, making few pauses, and giving no distinct intimations that he is changing the subject. Now from the turbulent city his mind turns to the false-hearted councillor. "*For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it.*" It was not an open foe, but a pretended friend; he went over to the other camp and tried to prove the reality of his treachery by calumniating his old friend. None are such real enemies as false friends. Reproaches from those who have been intimate with us, and trusted by us, cut us to the quick; and they are usually so well acquainted with our peculiar weaknesses that they know how to touch us where we are most sensitive, and to speak so as to do us most damage. The slanders of an avowed antagonist are seldom so mean and dastardly as those of a traitor, and the absence of the elements of ingratitude and treachery renders them less hard to bear. We can bear from Shimei what we cannot endure from Ahithophel. "*Neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him.*" We can find a hiding-place from open foes, but who can escape from treachery? If our enemies proudly boast over us we nerve our souls for resistance, but when those who pretended to love us leer at us with contempt, whither shall we go? Our blessed Lord had to endure at its worst the deceit and faithlessness of a favoured disciple; let us not marvel when we are called to tread the road which is marked by his pierced feet.

13. "*But it was thou.*" He sees him. The poetic fury is on him, he sees the traitor as though he stood before him in flesh and blood. He singles him out, he points his finger at him, he challenges him to his face. "*But thou.*" *Et tu, Brute.* And thou, Ahithophel, art thou here? Judas, betrayest *thou* the Son of Man? "*A man mine equal.*" Treated by me as one of my own rank, never looked upon as an inferior, but as a trusted friend. "*My guide,*" a counseller so sage that I trusted thine advice and found it prudent to do so. "*And mine acquaintance,*" with whom I was on most intimate terms, who knew me even as I knew him by mutual disclosures of heart. No stranger occasionally conversed with, but a near and dear friend admitted to my secret fellowship. It was fiendish treason for such a one to prove false-hearted. There was no excuse for such villainy. Judas stood very much in this relation to our Lord, he was treated as an equal, trusted as treasurer, and in that capacity often consulted with. He knew the place where the Master was wont to spend his solitude, in fact, he knew all the Master's movements, and yet he betrayed him to his remorseless adversaries. How justly might the Lord have pointed at him and said, "*But thou;*" but his gentler spirit warned the son of perdition in the mildest manner, and had not Iscariot been tenfold a child of hell he would have relinquished his detestable purpose.

14. "*We took sweet counsel together.*" It was not merely the counsel which men take together in public or upon common themes, their fellowship had been tender and confidential. The traitor had been treated lovingly, and trusted much. Solace, mutual and cheering, had grown out of their intimate communings. There were secrets between them of no common kind. Soul had been in converse with soul, at least on David's part. However feigned might have been the affection of the treacherous one, the betrayed friend had not dealt with him coldly, or guarded his utterance before him. Shame on the wretch who could belie such fellowship, and betray such confidence! "*And walked unto the house of God in company.*" Religion had rendered their intercourse sacred, they had mingled their worship, and communed on heavenly themes. If ever any bonds ought to be held inviolable, religious connections should be. There is a measure of impiety, of a detestable sort, in the deceit which debases the union of men who make professions of godliness. Shall the very altar of God be defiled with hypocrisy? Shall the gatherings of the temple be polluted by the presence of treachery? All this was true of Ahithophel, and in a measure of Judas. His union with the Lord was on the score of faith, they were joined in the holiest of enterprises, he had been sent on the most gracious of errands. His co-operation with Jesus to serve his own abominable ends stamped him as the firstborn of hell. Better had it been for him had he never been born. Let all deceitful professors be warned by his doom, for like Ahithophel he went to his own place by his own hand, and retains a horrible pre-eminence in the calendar of notorious crime. Here was one source of heart-break for the Redeemer, and it is shared in by his followers. Of the serpent's brood some vipers still remain, who will sting the hand that cherished them, and sell for silver those who raised them to the position which rendered it possible for them to be so abominably treacherous.

15 Let death seize upon them, *and* let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness *is* in their dwellings, *and* among them.

15. Not thus would Jesus pray, but the rough soldier David so poured out the anguish of his spirit, under treachery and malice seldom equalled and altogether unprovoked. The soldier, as such, desires the overthrow of his foes, for this very end he fights; and viewed as a matter of law and justice, David was right in his wish; he was waging a just, defensive war against men utterly regardless of truth and justice. Read the words as a warrior's imprecation. "*Let death seize upon them.*" Traitors such as these deserve to die, there is no living with them, earth is polluted by their tread; if spies are shot, much more these sneaking villains. "*Let them go down quick into hell.*" While in the vigour of life into *sheol* let them sink, let them suddenly exchange the enjoyment of the quick or living for the sepulchres of the dead. There is, however, no need to read this verse as an imprecation, it is rather a confident expectation or prophecy: God would, he was sure, desolate them, and cast them out of the land of the living into the regions of the dead. "*For wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them.*" They are too bad to be spared, for their houses are dens of infamy, and their hearts fountains of mischief. They are a pest to the commonwealth, a moral plague, a spiritual pestilence, to be stamped out by the laws of men and the providence of God. Both Ahithophel and Judas soon ended their own lives; Absalom was hanged in the oak, and the rebels perished in the wood in great numbers. There is justice in the universe, love itself demands it; pity to rebels against God, as such, is no virtue—we pray for them as creatures, we abhor them as enemies of God. We need in these days far more to guard against the disguised iniquity which sympathises with evil, and counts punishment to be cruelty, than against the harshness of a former age. We have steered so far from Scylla that Charybdis is absorbing us.

16 As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me.

17 Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.

18 He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle *that was* against me: for there were many with me.

19 God shall hear, and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. Selah. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.

16. "*As for me, I will call upon God.*" The psalmist would not endeavour to meet the plots of his adversaries by counterplots, or imitate their incessant violence, but in direct opposition to their godless behaviour would continually resort to his God. Thus Jesus did, and it has been the wisdom of all believers to do the same. As this exemplifies the contrast of their character, so it will foretell the contrast of their end—the righteous shall ascend to their God, the wicked shall sink to ruin. "*And the Lord shall save me.*" Jehovah will fulfil my desire, and glorify himself in my deliverance. The psalmist is quite sure. He knows that he will pray, and is equally clear that he will be heard. The covenant name is the pledge of the covenant promise.

17. "*Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray.*" Often but none too often. Seasons of great need call for frequent seasons of devotion. The three periods chosen are most fitting; to begin, continue, and end the day with God is supreme wisdom. Where time has naturally set up a boundary, there let us set up an altar-stone. The psalmist means that he will always pray; he will run a line of prayer right along the day, and track the sun with his petitions. Day and night he saw his enemies busy (verse 10), and therefore he would meet their activity by continuous prayer. "*And cry aloud.*" He would give a tongue to his complaint; he would be very earnest in his pleas with heaven. Some cry aloud who never say a word. It is the bell of the heart that rings loudest in heaven. Some read it, "I will muse and murmur;" deep heart-thoughts should be attended with inarticulate but vehement utterances of grief. Blessed be God, moaning is translatable in heaven. A father's heart reads a child's heart. "*And he shall hear my voice.*" He is confident that he will prevail; he makes no question that he would be heard, he speaks as if already he were answered. When our window is opened towards heaven, the windows of heaven are open to us. Have but a pleading heart and God will have a plenteous hand.

18. "*He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me.*" The deliverance has come. Joab has routed the rebels. The Lord has justified the cause of his anointed. Faith sees as well as foresees; to her foresight is sight. He is not only safe but serene, "*delivered in peace*"—peace in his inmost soul. "*For there were many with me;*" many contending against me. Or it may be that he thankfully acknowledges that the Lord raised him up unexpected allies, fetched him succour when he most needed it, and made the friendless monarch once more the head of a great army. The Lord can soon change our condition, and he often does so when our prayers become fervent. The crisis of life is usually the secret place of wrestling. Jabbok makes Jacob a prevailing prince. He who stripped us of all friends to make us see himself in their absence, can give them back again in greater numbers that we may see him more joyfully in the fact of their presence.

19. "*God shall hear, and afflict them.*" They make a noise as well as I, and God will hear them. The voice of slander, malice, and pride, is not alone heard by those whom it grieves, it reaches to heaven, it penetrates the divine ear, it demands vengeance, and shall have it. God hears and delivers his people, he hears and destroys the wicked. Their cruel jests, their base falsehoods, their cowardly insults, their daring blasphemies are heard, and shall be repaid to them by the eternal Judge. "*Even he that abideth of old.*" He sits in eternity, enthroned judge for evermore; all the prayers of saints and profanities

of sinners are before his judgment-seat, and he will see that justice is done. "*Selah.*" The singer pauses, overwhelmed with awe in the presence of the everlasting God. "*Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.*" His own reverential feeling causes him to remember the daring godlessness of the wicked; he feels that his trials have driven him to his God, and he declares that their uninterrupted prosperity was the cause of their living in such neglect of the Most High. It is a very manifest fact that long-continued ease and pleasure are sure to produce the worst influences upon graceless men: though troubles do not convert them, yet the absence of them makes their corrupt nature more readily develop itself. Stagnant water becomes putrid. Summer heat breeds noxious insects. He who is without trouble is often without God. It is a forcible proof of human depravity that man turns the mercy of God into nutriment for sin: the Lord save us from this.

20 He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant.

21 *The words* of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war *was* in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet *were* they drawn swords.

20. The psalmist cannot forget the traitor's conduct, and returns again to consider it. "*He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him.*" He smites those to whom he had given the hand of friendship, he breaks the bonds of alliance, he is perfidious to those who dwell at ease because of his friendly professions. "*He hath broken his covenant.*" The most solemn league he has profaned, he is regardless of oaths and promises.

21. "*The words of his mouth were smoother than butter.*" He lauded and larded the man he hoped to devour. He buttered him with flattery and then battered him with malice. Beware of a man who has too much honey on his tongue; a trap is to be suspected where the bait is so tempting. Soft, smooth, oily words are most plentiful where truth and sincerity are most scarce. "*But war was in his heart.*" He brought forth butter in a lordly dish, but he had a tent-pin ready for the temples of his guest. When heart and lip so widely differ, the man is a monster, and those whom he assails are afflicted indeed. "*His words were softer than oil.*" Nothing could be more unctuous and fluent, there were no objectionable syllables, no jars or discords, his words were as yielding as the best juice of the olive; "*yet were they drawn swords,*" rapiers unsheathed, weapons brandished for the fray. Ah! base wretch, to be cajoling your victim while intending to devour him! entrapping him as if he were but a beast of prey; surely, such art thou thyself!

22 Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

22. "*Thy burden,*" or what thy God lays upon thee, lay thou it "*upon the Lord.*" His wisdom casts it on thee, it is thy wisdom to cast it on him. He cast thy lot for thee, cast thy lot on him. He gives thee thy portion of suffering, accept it with cheerful resignation, and then take it back to him by thine assured confidence. "*He shall sustain thee.*" Thy bread shall be given thee, thy waters shall be sure. Abundant nourishment shall fit thee to bear all thy labours and trials. As thy days so shall thy strength be. "*He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.*" He may move like the boughs of a tree in the tempest, but he shall never be moved like a tree torn up by the roots. He stands firm who stands in God. Many would destroy the saints, but God has not suffered it, and never will. Like pillars, the godly stand immovable, to the glory of the Great Architect.

23 But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction; bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days: but I will trust in thee.

23. For the ungodly a sure, terrible, and fatal overthrow is appointed. Climb as they may, *the pit* yawns for them, God himself will cause them to descend into it, and *destruction* there shall be their portion. "*Bloody and deceitful men*," with double iniquity of cruelty and craft upon them, "*shall not live out half their days*;" they shall be cut off in their quarrels, or being disappointed in their artifices, vexation shall end them. They were in heart murderers of others, and they became in reality self-murderers. Doubt not that virtue lengthens life, and that vice tends to shorten it. "*But I will trust in thee.*" A very wise, practical conclusion. We can have no better ground of confidence. The Lord is all, and more than all that faith can need as the foundation of peaceful dependence. Lord, increase our faith evermore.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—Maschil. This is often prefixed to those Psalms in which David speaks of himself as being chastened by God, inasmuch as the end of chastisement is instruction.—*Simon de Muis*, 1587—1644.

Whole Psalm.—A prayer of the Man Christ in his humiliation, despised and rejected of men, when he was made sin for his people, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him, when he was about to suffer their punishment, pay their debt, and discharge their ransom.

Utter depravity of the inhabitants of Jerusalem; betrayment of Messiah by one of the twelve whom he had ordained to the apostolical office, and who was Messiah's constant attendant in all his ministerial circuits.

Premature and punitive death of the traitor Judas, and of others banded together to crucify the Lord of glory.—*John Noble Coleman, M.A., in "A Revision of the authorised English Versions of the Book of Psalms,"* 1863.

Verse 1.—In the first clause he uses the word תְּפִלָּתִי, that he might indicate that he merely sought justice from God as a Judge; but in the second he implores the *favour of God*, that if perchance the prayer for *justice* be less becoming to himself as a sinner, God may not deny his grace.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 1.—"*Hide not thyself from my supplication.*" A figure taken from the conduct of a king who debars an offender from seeing his face (2 Sam. xiv. 24), or from an enemy, who conceals himself from the ox, etc.; that is, pretends not to see it, and goes away, leaving it (see Deut. xxii. 1, 3, 4; and Isa. lviii. 7); or, from a false friend, or an unkind person, who, foreseeing that he may be entreated by a miserable and needy man, will not let himself be seen, but seeks to make his escape.—*Martin Geier*, 1614—1681.

Verse 2.—"*I mourn.*" As one cast down with sorrow, making a doleful noise.—*Henry Ainsworth*,—1622.

Verse 2.—"*I mourn*," etc. A mourning supplicant shall neither lose his prayers nor his tears; for, "*I mourn*," is brought for a reason of his hope that God shall attend and hear him.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 2.—"*I mourn in my complaint.*" The literal translation of these words

is, *I will suffer to wander in my thinking; i.e.*, I will let my mind wander, or my thoughts rove as they will.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 2.—"*In my complaint.*" Saints have their complaints on account of their sins and corruptions, their barrenness and unfruitfulness, and the decay of vital religion in them, and because of the low estate of Zion, the declining state of the interest of Christ, and the little success of his gospel; and they mourn, in these complaints, over their own sins, and the sins of others, professors and profane, and under afflictions temporal and spiritual, both their own and the church's. Christ also in the days of his flesh, had his complaints of the perverseness and faithlessness of the generation of men among whom he lived; of the frowardness, pride, and contentions, of his disciples; of the reproaches, insult, and injuries of his enemies; and of the dereliction of his God and Father; and he often mourned on account of one or other of these things, being a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs.—*John Gill.*

Verse 2.—"*In my complaint.*" The word here employed commonly means discourse, meditation. It here occurs in the sense of *complaint*, as in Job vii. 13; ix. 27; xxi. 4; xxiii. 2; Ps. cxlii. 2; 1 Sam. i. 16. It is not used, however, to denote complaint in the sense of fault-finding, complaining, accusing, or the idea that we have been dealt with unjustly. This is not the meaning in this place or in the Scriptures generally. It is the language of a *troubled*, not of an *injured* spirit.—*Albert Barnes*, 1868.

Verse 2.—In confession, when the soul melts into a holy shame and sorrow for the sins he spreads before the Lord, he feels a holy smart and pain within, and doth not act a tragical part with a comical heart. Chrysostom saith, "To paint tears is worse than to paint the face." Here is true fervency, "*I mourn in my complaint and make a noise.*" There may be fire in the pan when there is none in the piece; a loud wind but no rain with it. David made a noise with his voice, and mourned in his spirit.—*William Gurnall*, 1617—1679.

Verse 3.—"*Because of the voice of the enemy,*" there is their railing; "*because of the oppression of the wicked,*" there is their violent robbing him of his estate; "*they cast iniquity upon me,*" there are their slanderous traducings of him, and charging him with faults falsely; "*in wrath they hate me,*" there is their cruel seeking to kill.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 3.—"*For they cast iniquity upon me.*" They tumble it on me, as men do stones or anything else upon their besiegers, to endamage them; so did these sin, shame, anything, upon innocent David, to make him odious.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 4.—"*Is sore pained,*" or, *trembleth with pain.* The word usually meaneth such *pains as a woman feeleth in her travail.—Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 4.—"*The terrors of death are fallen upon me.*" "*My heart,*" said the afflicted psalmist, "*is sore pained within me;*" and though I am repeatedly assured of my interest in the divine love and favour, yet now "*the terrors of death are fallen upon me.*" The case of David is so far from being peculiar to himself, that it portrays, in the most striking colours, a state of mind to which many of the most exemplary Christians are frequently, if not constantly, subject. Many, whose hopes are placed on the right foundation, even Christ Jesus, and whose conduct is uniform and consistent, are yet harassed almost continually by the tormenting fears of death. . . . It will be an interesting and useful inquiry to examine into the real causes of a fear, which cultivates melancholy and despondency on the one hand and destroys our happiness on the other. To effect this design I shall consider, I. The various causes of the fear of death. II. The arguments calculated to remove it. There are few, indeed, so hardened in the slavery of vice, or so utterly regardless of every admonition, as to consider the awful period of dissolution without some emotions of terror and dismay. There is something so peculiarly awful in the idea of a change hitherto unknown, and of a state hitherto untried, that the most hardy veterans have owned its tremendous aspects. . . . One of the first causes of the fear of

death is *conscious guilt.* The most hardened are conscious of many things which they may not readily confess; and the most self-righteous is conscious of many crimes which he artfully studies to conceal. Whilst the Christian is looking only to his own habits and temper, he may and will be always wretched; but if he looks to the great Surety, Christ Jesus, his gloomy prospect will soon be turned to joy. An *attachment to this world* is also a (second) cause of the fear of death. A principle of self-preservation is also a (third) cause of the fear of death. That our bodies, which are pampered by pride and nourished by indulgence, should be consigned to the silent grave, and become even the food of worms, is a humbling reflection to the boasted dignity of man. Besides, nature revolts at the idea of its own dissolution; hence a desire of preserving life, evidently implanted in us. The devil is also (fourthly) often permitted to terrify the consciences of men, and thereby increase at least the fear of death. Unbelief is also a (fifth) cause of the fear of death. Were our faith more frequently in exercise, we should be enabled to look beyond the dreary mansions of the grave with a hope full of immortality. Our fears of death may be often caused by looking for that perfection in ourselves, which we shall never easily discover. II. Consider the arguments calculated to remove the fear of death. It may be necessary to premise that the consolations of religion belong only to real Christians; for the wicked have just reason to dread the approach of death. But to such as are humbled under a sense of their own unworthiness, and who have fled to Christ for pardon and salvation, they have no cause to apprehend either the pain or the consequences of death; because first, the sting of death is taken away. Secondly, because death is no longer an enemy but a friend. Instead of threatening us with misery, it invites us to happiness. Thirdly, the safety of our state is founded on the oath, the purpose, and promises of God. A fourth argument calculated to remove the fear of death, is the consideration of the benefits resulting from it. The benefits which believers receive from Christ at the resurrection also, is a fifth argument calculated to remove the fear of death.—*Condensed from a Sermon by John Grove, M.A., F.A.S.*, 1802.

Verses 4, 5.—In the version of the Psalter used in the Prayer-book, this verse stands with a more homely and expressive simplicity, "My heart is disquieted within me, and the fear of death is fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and an horrible dread hath overwhelmed me." The fear of death is upon all flesh. It is no sign of manhood to be without it. To overcome it in the way of duty is courage; to meet death with patience is faith; but not to fear it is either a gift of special grace, or a dangerous insensibility. No doubt great saints have been able to say, "I have a desire to depart." And many have rushed to martyrdom, as to the love and bosom of their Lord; but for the rest, the multitude of his flock, who are neither wilful sinners, nor to be numbered among the saints, the thought of death is a thought of fear. We see that, on the first feeling of their having so much as set foot in the path leading to the grave, even good men feel the "terror of death," "a horrible dread," which makes every pulse to beat with a hurried and vehement speed. Their whole nature, both in body and in soul, trembles to its very centre; and their heart is "disquieted," "sore pained," within them. . . .

Let us see what are the causes or reasons of this "fear of death." The first must needs be a consciousness of personal sinfulness. A sense of unfitness to meet God, our unreadiness to die, a multitude of personal faults, evil tempers, thoughts, and inclinations; the recollection of innumerable sins, of great omissions and lukewarmness in all religious duties, the little love or gratitude we have to God, and the great imperfection of our repentance; all these make us tremble at the thought of going to give up our account. We feel as if it were impossible we could be saved. Shame, fear, and a "horrible dread" fall upon us.—*Henry Edward Manning, M.A.*, 1850.

Verse 5.—"*Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me.*" In this pitiful

condition of mind, learn, that it is not a thing inconsistent with godliness to be much moved with fear in time of danger; natural affections are not taken away in conversion, but sanctified and moderated.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 5.—"*Fearfulness.*" How natural is this description! He is *in distress*, he *mourns*, *makes a noise*, *sobs* and *sighs*, his *heart is wounded*, he expects nothing but *death;* this produces *fear*, this produces *tremor*, which terminates in that *deep apprehension* of *approaching* and *inevitable ruin* that *overwhelms* him with *horror.* No man ever described a wounded heart like David.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 6.—"*And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.*" Wherever the psalmist cast his eye, the inscription was vanity and vexation. A deluge of sin and misery covered the world, so that like Noah's dove he could find no rest for the sole of his foot below, therefore does he direct his course toward heaven, and say, "*Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest;*" but rest is not a denizen of this world, nothing but the heaven of heavens is at rest, and here does he fix only. —*Thomas Sharp* (1630—1693), *in* "*Divine Comforts.*"

Verse 6.—"*Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.*" King David, though for innocency not only a *dove*, but the phœnix of doves, and so a notable type of Christ, upon whom the Holy Ghost descended in the shape of a dove, yet was his whole life nothing else but *bellum sine induciis*, a perpetual persecution without intermission. Such was also the portion of Christ the Lord of David; and such to the world's end will ever be the lot of those that are the heritage of Christ. My text imports no less; which, taken *historically*, is the voice of David pursued by his enemies; *prophetically*, the voice of Christ at his passion; *mystically*, the voice of that mystical dove, the innocent soul, surrounded and environed with the snares of death; even *generalis quædam querela* (saith Pellican), a general complaint of the malice of the wicked persecuting the righteous. For (alas that it should be! yet so it is)—

"*Non rete accipitri tenditur, neque milvio,*
Qui malè faciunt nobis; illis qui nil faciunt tenditur."*

"The net is not pitched for ravenous birds, as are the hawk and the kite; but for poor harmless birds, that never meditate mischief." And

"*Dat veniam corvis, vexat censura columbas.*"

"The dove shall surely be shot at, when the carrion-crow shall go shot-free."†

It will then be no news unto you, that here the faithful soul, the spouse, the dove of Christ, when trouble and heaviness take hold upon her, and the floods of Belial compass her about, *Tanquam avis è cave liberari cupit* (as St. Austin speaks of the cloistered monks in his time), "Desireth like a bird to be loosed out of her cage." Or, that as Jonas (by interpretation *a dove*), after three days' and three nights' imprisonment in the whale's belly, could not but long after his enlargement. So the dove-like soul of man, when not three, but many days, and months, and years, she hath been imprisoned in the body, hath a longing desire to be enlarged, and to fly unto God that made her; and so *mourning* like a dove in devout *supplication*, and *mounting* like a dove in divine *speculation*, breaks forth into these sad elegies: "Oh that I had wings!" and "Alas, that I have not wings! Woe is me that I am constrained to dwell with Mesech, and to have mine habitation among the tents of Kedar. Like as the hart desires the water-brook, so longeth my soul to be with thee, O God. I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ. Who will give me wings?" etc. Which is as if the poor distressed soul, pathetically bemoaning her forlorn estate of pilgrimage, should thus more plentifully enlarge herself. "My spouse is already ascended higher than the winds, than the clouds, than the highest heavens, and I, poor

* Terence. † Juvenal.

soul, as a husbandless widow, as a tutorless orphan, as a comfortless exile, am left desolate and disconsolate in this valley of tears; none to care for me, none to comfort me, till I have regained him whom I love, and in whom I live Nay (which worse is), this mine own familiar friend, this nearest and dearest companion of mine, *my body*, is even a burden unto me. The weight of it, and oft the sins that hang so fast on it, doth so clog and shackle me, so glue and nail me to the earth, that I cannot raise or rear up myself towards heaven. Or let him therefore descend to relieve me, being *filia*, *sponsa*, *soror*, his daughter, and spouse, and sister; or let him give me wings wherewith I may ascend to him, under the shadow of whose wings I shall surely rest in safety." Ps. xci. 4.

"I must confess it was the very bitterness of extremity that first compelled me to love him, though of himself no less lovely than love itself. It was the sharp sauce of affliction that gave edge to mine affections, and sharpened mine appetite to that 'sweet meat that endureth to everlasting life.' But now, having had some little foretaste of him, I am even in an holy ecstacy, so ravished, so transported with a fervent desire of him and of his presence, that *ubi sum, ibi non sum; ubi non sum, ibi animus est:* "where I am, there I am not; and where I am not, there am I." For, *anima est ubi amat, non ubi animat:* * "The soul is where it loveth, not where it liveth." Now sigh I not so much for the present dangers I would decline, as because of my absent love, whom I most desire. "*Who will give me wings?*" etc.

In the scanning of which verse, ye will observe with me,

I. The *efficient* or *author* of these wings—God. "Who will give me?" Who? that is, who but *God?*

II. The *matter* of the wish—"*wings.*" "Who will give me wings?"

III. The *form* of those wings—*dove-like.* "Who will give me wings like unto a dove?"

IV. The *end mediate—flying.* "Then would I fly away."

V. The *end ultimate—resting.* "And be at rest."

I. "Who will give me?" There's *Christian humility.* II. "Who will give me wings?" There's *prudent celerity.* III. "Wings like unto a dove." There's *innocent simplicity.* IV. "Then would I fly away." There's *devout sublimity.* V. "And be at rest." There's *permanent security.*—*John Rawlinson, in "The Dove-like Soule. A Sermon preached before the Prince's Highnes at Whitehall," Feb.* 19, 1618.

Verse 6.—"*Oh that I had wings,*" etc. Some of the most astounding sermons ever delivered have been preached on this text, which was a very favourite one with the old divines. They ransacked Pliny and Aldrovandus for the most outrageous fables about doves, their eyes, their livers, their crops, and even their dung, and then went on to find emblems of Christians in every fact and fable. Griffith Williams, at considerable length, enlarges upon the fact that David did not desire wings like a grasshopper to hop from flower to flower, as those hasty souls who leap in religion but do not run with perseverance; nor like an ostrich which keeps to the earth, though it be a bird, as hypocrites do who never mount towards heavenly things; nor like an eagle, or a peacock, or a beetle, or a crow, or a kite, or a bat; and after he has shown in many ways the similarity between the godly and doves, he refers us to Hugo Cardinalis, and others, for more. We do not think it would be to edification to load these pages with such eccentricities and conceits. This one single sentence from Bishop Patrick is worth them all, "He rather wished than hoped to escape." He saw no way of escape except by some improbable or impossible means.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 6.—When the Gauls had tasted the wine of Italy, they asked where the grapes grew, and would never be quiet till they came there. Thus may you cry, "*Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.*" A believer is willing to lose the world for the enjoyment of grace; and he is willing to leave the world for the fruition of glory.—*William Secker.*

* Erasmus.

Verse 6.—"*Wings like a dove.*" The pigeon, or dove, is one of the swiftest of birds.—*The Religious Tract Society's "Book of Psalms, with Preface and Explanatory Notes."*

Verse 6.—An old writer tells us it would have been more honourable for him to have asked for the strength of an ox to bear his trials, than for the wings of a dove to flee from them.—*William Jay*, 1769—1853.

Verse 6.—"*Dove.*" The reference is to the turtle-dove, I suppose. Their low, sad plaint may be heard all day long at certain seasons in the olive-groves, and in the solitary and shady valleys among these mountains; I have, however, been more affected by it in the vast orchards round Damascus than anywhere else—so subdued, so very sorrowful among the trees, where the air sighs softly, and little rills roll their melting murmurs down the flowery aisles. These birds can never be tamed. Confined in a cage they droop, and like Cowper, sigh for

> "A lodge in some vast wilderness—some boundless contiguity of shade;"

and no sooner are they set at liberty than they flee, as a bird. to their mountain. Ps. xi. 1. David refers to their habits in this respect when his heart was sore pained within him: "*Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness.*" And there you will meet these timid birds far away from the haunts of cruel hunters, of whose society they are peculiarly suspicious.—*W M. Thomson, in "The Land and the Book,"* 1859.

Verse 6.—"*Oh that I had wings,*" etc.—

> At first her mother-earth she holdeth deare,
> And doth embrace the world and worldly things;
> She flies close by the ground, and hovers here,
> And mounts not up with her celestiall wings.
>
> Yet under heaven she cannot light on ought
> That with her heavenly nature doth agree;
> She cannot rest, she cannot fix her thought,
> She cannot in this world contented be:
>
> * * * * *
>
> Then as a bee which among weeds doth fall,
> Which seeme sweet flowers, with lustre fresh and gay;
> She lights on that, and this, and tasteth all,
> But pleas'd with none, doth rise and soare away;
>
> So when the Soule finds here no true content;
> And, like Noah's dove, can no sure footing take,
> She doth returne from whence she first was sent,
> And flies to him that first her wings did make.
>
> *Sir John Davies*, 1569—1626.

Verse 7.—"*Lo, then would I wander far off,*" etc. A passage in the "Octavia of Seneca has been referred to as being parallel to this of David. It is in the answer of Octavia to the Chorus, act v., ver. 914—923.

> My woes who enough can bewail?
> O what notes can my sorrows express?
> Sweet Philomel's self e'en would fail
> To respond with her plaintive distress.
> O had I her wings, I would fly
> To where sorrows I ne'er should feel more,
> Upborne on her plumes through the sky,
> Regions far from mankind would explore.
> In a grove where sad silence should reign,
> On a spray would I seat me alone;
> In shrill lamentations complain,
> And in wailings would pour forth my moan.
>
> *J. B. Clarke* [*From Adam Clarke, in loc.*]

Verse 8.—"*I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.*" There was a windy storm and tempest without, and which is worse, a tumult and combustion within in his thoughts. A man may escape from external confusions, but how shall he fly from himself? If he be out of the reach of all the blood-suckers on earth, and all the furies in hell, yet be dogged and haunted with his own turbulent, ungovernable cogitations, he needs no other tormentors. This holy man was thus doubly distressed, a storm abroad and an earthquake at home rendered his condition most dolorous; but for both he hath εν μεγα; he goes not about with the foxes of this world to relieve himself with subtle stratagems and wiles, by carnal shifts and policies, a vanity tossed to and fro by them that seek death. No, his one great refuge is to get aloft, to ascend to God.—*Thomas Sharp.*

Verse 9.—"*Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues.*" In the first place, their tongues were truly destroyed and they themselves divided, when the testimony of the two false witnesses agreed not so together. Then, secondly, by the contradictory account of the soldiers that kept watch at the sepulchre.—*Michael Ayguan* (1416), *in J. M. Neale's Commentary*, 1860.

Verse 9.—"*Divide their tongues:*" *i.e.*, cause them to give conflicting opinions. —*French and Skinner*, 1842.

Verse 10.—"*Mischief also and sorrow are in the midst of it.*" The city, as Abenezra observes, was like a circle; violence and strife were as a line round about it, and mischief and sorrow the centre of it; and these two commonly go together: where mischief is, sorrow follows.—*John Gill.*

Verse 12.—"*Then I could have borne it.*" It is remarkable that the Lord, who endured the other unspeakable sorrows and agonies of his passion in perfect and marvellous silence, allowed his grief at this one alone to escape him, bewailing himself to his disciples that one of them should betray him, and addressing that one, when he was taken, in these words of reproach—"Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?"—*Fra Thomé de Jesu*, —1582.

Verse 12.—"*Then I would have hid myself from him.*" It is generally easy to get out of the way of an avowed enemy, but how can one be on his guard against a treacherous friend?—*A. R. Fausset, in "A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical,"* 1866.

Verse 13.—"*A man mine equal.*" The LXX here not badly, *ισόψυχε* (of equal soul), Jerome, *unanimus mens* (of one mind).—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 14.—"*We took sweet counsel.*" From עָתַק *to be sweet*, and the ordinary notion of סוֹד for *secret*, the phrase נמתיק סוד will literally be read, *we made our secret sweet.* And so it may be an elegance, to signify the pleasure of his friendship, or of communicating secrets to him.—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 14.—The first clause speaks of private intimacy, the next of association in public acts, and especially in the great festivals and processions of the temple.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne*, 1864.

Verse 14.—"*In company.*" In the end of the verse בְּרֶגֶשׁ may be rendered *with a noise:* and so the Chaldee seems to have taken it, which reads *with haste;* and to that agree the Jewish doctors, who tell us men are to go in *haste* and with *speed* to the *synagogue*, but return thence very *leisurely.*—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 15.—"*Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell.*" The last part and end of sinners' lives is worst with them. They have in their lives been busily trading in the world, buying and selling, and getting gain and ruffling it in the world, but meanwhile by their sins they run deep in debt with God, and for want of interest in Christ to be their surety at death (it may be

on the sudden) it comes to that of the psalmist, "*Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell.*" Death seizeth on them unawares, as a sergeant or pursevant, casts them into prison, which is expressed by their going down quick into hell (as it is said Num. xvi. 32, 33), that Korah and his company did.—*Anthony Tuckney*, 1599—1670.

Verse 15.—"*Let death seize upon them*" by divine warrant, and let them go quick into hell; let them be dead and buried, and damned in a moment; for wickedness is wherever they are, it is in the midst of them. The souls of impenitent sinners go down quick, or alive, into hell; for they have a perfect sense of their miseries, and shall therefore live still, that they may be still miserable. This prayer is a prophecy of the utter, the final, the everlasting ruin of all those who, whether secretly or openly, oppose and rebel against the Lord's Messiah.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 15.—"*Quick*," that is, *alive*, like Korah, Dathan and Abiram.—*From* "*The Psalms chronologically arranged. By Four Friends*," 1867.

Verse 15.—Throughout this series of Psalms, there appears to be a peculiar penalty attached to each class of transgressions, or, each variety of opposition against God meets a suitable end. The ungodly, that is, the irreligious and indifferent, lay up for themselves an evil recompence when the wrath of God shall be revealed (Psalm liv. 5): but an instant punishment falls upon false and treacherous professors; as Paul denounced "anathema" against any who perverted the gospel of Christ in the churches of Galatia; so in this Psalm, "*Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell*," announces the awful judgment of Jehovah, as once it was shown upon Dathan and Abiram; a punishment that will by its suddenness and notoriety at the same time expose the guilt, and make manifest the displeasure of the Almighty against it.—*R. H. Ryland, in* "*The Psalms restored to Messiah*," 1853.

Verse 17.—"*Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray.*"—This was the custom of the pious Hebrews. See Dan. vi. 10. The Hebrews began their day in the *evening*, and hence David mentions the *evening first.* The rabbins say, men should pray three times each day, because the day changes three times. This was observed in the primitive church; but the times in different places were various. The old Psalter gives this a curious turn: "At *even* I sall tel his louing (*praise*) what tim Crist was on the Crosse; and at *morn* I sall schew his louing, what tim he ros fra dede. And sua he sall here my voice at *midday*, that is sitand at the right hand of his fader, wheder he stegh (ascended) at midday."—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 17.—"*Evening and morning*," etc. The three principal parts of the day are mentioned, not as marking special times set apart for prayer, but as a poetical expression for "the whole day," "at all times," "without ceasing."—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 17.—If our poor, frail bodies need refreshment from food three times a day, who, that knows his own weakness, will say that we need not as frequent refreshment for our poor frail spirits?—*William S. Plumer*, 1867.

Verse 17.—I can no more believe him to be frequent and spiritual in ejaculatory prayer, who neglects the season of solemn prayer, than I can believe that he keeps every day in the week a Sabbath, who neglects to keep that one which God hath appointed.—*William Gurnall*, 1617—1679.

Verse 17.—There is no limited time in the court of heaven for hearing petitions. It is not like the court of earthly princes, for there is a free access any day of the week, any hour of the day, or the night, any minute of the hour. As the lawyer saith of the king, for having his due, *Nullum tempus occurrit regi:* so may I say of the godly, for making his prayers and granting his requests, *Nullum tempus occurrit fidelibus*, no time unseasonable, so the heart be seasoned with faith; no *non term* in God's court of requests. He keeps continually open house for all comers and goers; and indeed, most for comers, then goers. His eyes are always open to behold our tears; his ears are always open

to hear our groans; his heart also and his bowels are always open, and never shut up so fast, but they will yearn and turn within him, if our misery be never so little. For as we have not an High Priest to pray by "that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities;" so neither have we a God to pray to, that shall see us in distress, and hear us call and cry, and never be moved.—*Zachary Bogan* (1625—1659), *in "Meditations of the Mirth of a Christian Life."*

Verse 17.—"*And cry aloud.*" The word here employed properly means to murmur; to make a humming sound; to sigh; to growl; to groan. Here the language means that he would give utterance to his deep feelings in appropriate tones—whether words, sighs, or groans.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 17.—"*And he shall hear.*" And what will this loud cry obtain? A hearing without doubt, so he assures himself, "*He shall hear me.*" Not that God hears any prayers whether he will or no (as men sometimes do that upon importunity which they have no mind to); but he hath no will, no mind not to hear such prayers, the prayers of those who cry aloud to him.—*Joseph Caryl*, 1602—1673.

Verse 18.—"*He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle.*" In the midst of war the Lord can keep a man as safe as in the time of peace, and in extreme perils preserve him from danger. He that depends upon God in the time of trouble, albeit he had an host against him, yet hath he more with him when God is with him, than can be against him.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 18.—"*For.*" The "*for*" implies the reason why God interposed to deliver him; namely, because of the general principle that God ministers relief when his people are come to an extremity.—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 18.—"*There were many with me.*" This is doubtful whether it be meant of *foes* or *friends*. If of *foes*, it may be resolved thus: *for with many* (with a great multitude) *they were fighters with me*. If of *friends*, it may be understood of God's *angels*, that *in a great number were with him*, pitching camp for his aid (Psalm xxxiv. 7); as Elisha said, "Many more are with us than with them." 2 Kings vi. 16, 17. The Chaldee explaineth it, "For in many afflictions his word was for my help."—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 19.—"*Even he that abideth of old.*" The deeds by which God had already showed himself from of old as the righteous King and Judge, the judgments, for example, upon the wicked in the land of Shinar (ver. 9), the company of Korah (ver. 9 and 18), the cities of the plain (ver. 15), pledge his still ready interposition. He who had already so long held the throne, must now also show himself as King and Judge; he cannot now, at so late a period, be another.—*E. W. Hengstenberg*, 1845.

Verse 19.—"*Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.*" That is, there is no new thing among them, no extraordinary providential turns, no judiciary changes, their prosperity keeps a settled course, and because they find all things going on in the old course of providence, therefore they go on in their old course of sinfulness, "*they fear not God*;" intimating, that as such *changes* always should, so usually they do, awaken fear; and that, if the Lord would but change, and toss, and tumble them about, by various troublesome dispensations, surely they would fear him.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 19.—"*Because they have no changes*," etc. Or, "*with whom* also there be *no changes, yet they fear not God.*" If *changes* be referred to their temporal estates and welfare, as Job x. 17 (it is the same word there as here, חֲלִיפוֹת), "changes and war are against me;" then, according to the first translation, "*because*," etc., a reason is given of their perseverance in wickedness, and contempt of God; to wit, their constant and uninterrupted worldly prosperity. Or, according to the second, "*With whom there are no changes, yet*," etc.; it is a great aggravation of their impenitency, that notwithstanding so much goodness vouchsafed unto them, they should continue so unthankful as to requite so ill, or so stupid and insensible as not to acknowledge the author. But if changes

be referred, as by many, to the soul, then the meaning is—that through long use and continuance of sinning, they are, through God's just judgment, become altogether obdurate and inflexible; and therefore, no wonder it nothing work upon them to their conversion. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin?" etc. Jer. xiii. 23. But this "*changes*" might also have another meaning. The Grecians used to say, στρέπται φρένες ἐσθλων, that the minds or hearts of good men are changeable; their meaning is, that good men are merciful. *Quos quisque est major, magis est placabilis ira: et faciles motus mens generosa capit*, as the Latin proverb expresses it. He may therefore say, that they show by their cruel unmercifulness, that they have no fear or sense of God at all; else they would fear him, of whose mercy themselves stood in so much need, and consider that they whom they so fiercely persecute are his creatures as well as they.—*Westminster Assembly's Annotations.*

Verse 19.—"*They have no changes*," etc. Who are they who have no changes? Apparently those whom God is said to humble or chastise. And what is the meaning of the word, "*changes*" as here used? Many understand it of a moral change; "who are without change of heart or reformation." But the word never occurs in this sense. It means, properly, "*a change*," in the sense of *succession;* as of garments, of troops relieving guard, servants leaving work, and the like. Hence it would rather mean in a moral sense: "They who have no cessation in their course (by being relieved guard, for instance), who always continue, and persevere in their evil life." Calvin and others understand it of *change of fortune, i.e.*, "who are always prosperous;" but this again is not supported by usage.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 19.—"*They fear not God.*" The fear required here, is to fear him as God, and as God presented in this name, *Elohim;* which, though it be a name primarily rooted in power and strength (for *El* is *Deus fortis*, The powerful God; and as there is no love without fear, so there is no fear without power), yet properly it signifies his judgment, and order, and providence, and dispensations and government of his creatures. It is that name which goes through all God's whole work of the creation, and disposition of all creatures in the first of Genesis: in all that he is called by no other name than this, the name God; not by Jehovah, to present an infinite majesty; nor by Adonai, to present an absolute power; nor by Tzebaoth, to present a force, or conquest: but only the name of God, his name of government. All ends in this; to fear God is to adhere to him, in his way, as he hath dispensed and notified himself to us; that is, as God is manifested in Christ, in the Scriptures, and applied to us out of those Scriptures, by the church: not to rest in nature without God, nor in God without Christ.—*John Donne*, 1573—1631.

Verse 21.—"*The words of his mouth were smoother than butter*," etc. Of this complexion are the cant of hypocrites, the charity of bigots and fanatics, the benevolence of atheists, the professions of the world, the allurements of the flesh, and the temptations of Satan, when he thinks proper to appear in the character of an angel of light.—*George Horne*, 1730—1792.

Verse 21.—"*Butter.*" The Eastern butter is by no means like the solid substance, which is known by that name in these colder climates; but is liquid and flowing, as appears from different passages in Scripture, particularly Job xxix. 6; xx. 17; and as is confirmed by the accounts of modern travellers; so that in fact it more resembles "cream," which Vitringa says is the genuine sense of the word here used.—*Richard Mant*, 1776—1849.

Verse 21.—To avoid all difficulties, the readiest expedient is to receive the Septuagint rendering of חָלְקוּ, διεμερίσθησαν, *they were*, or *are divided*, viz., the *members* of the wicked man there spoken of, they are at great distance one from the other; מֵחֶמְאַת פִּיו, *butter their mouth*, or, *their mouth is butter*, וְקִרְבָּם and *war their heart*, or, *their heart is war;* and this seems to be the fairest rendering of it.—*Henry Hammond*, 1605—1660.

Verse 21.—A feigned friend is much like a crocodile who, when he

smileth, poisoneth; and when he weepeth, devoureth, or the hyæna, having the voice of a man and the mind of a wolf, speaking like a friend and devouring like a fiend; or the flattering sirens that sweetly sing the sailor's wreck; or the fowler's pipe that pleasantly playeth the bird's death; or the bee, who carrieth honey in her mouth and a sting in her tail; or the box-tree, whose leaves are always green, but the seeds poison. So his countenance is friendly and his words pleasant, but his intent dangerous, and his deeds unwholesome.

His fetch is to flatter, to catch what he can;
His purpose obtained, a fig for his man.

L. Wright, 1616.

Verse 21.—"*The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.*" Well, when I came to the justice again, there was Mr. Foster, of Bedford, who coming out of another room, and seeing me by the light of the candle, for it was dark night when I came thither, he said unto me, "Who is there? John Bunyan?" with much seeming affection, as if he would have leaped in my neck and kissed me,* which made me somewhat wonder that such a man as he, with whom I had so little acquaintance, and, besides, that had ever been a close opposer of the ways of God, should carry himself so full of love to me, but afterwards when I saw what he did, it caused me to remember those sayings, "*Their tongues were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords,*" and again, "Beware of men," etc. When I had answered him that, blessed be God, I was well, he said, "What is the occasion of your being here?" or to that purpose. To whom I answered that I was at a meeting of people a little way off, intending to speak a word of exhortation to them; but the justice hearing thereof (said I) was pleased to send his warrant to fetch me before him, etc.—*John Bunyan. In relation to J. B.'s imprisonment: written by himself. Offor's edit., Vol. I. p.* 52.

Verse 21 (*first clause*).—

Smooth are his words, his voice as honey sweet,
Yet war is in his heart, and dark deceit.

Moschus (*B.C.* 250).

Verse 22.—"*Cast thy burden upon the Lord,*" etc. The remedy which the Psalm suggests, and, perhaps, the only resource in a difficulty of the kind, where the enemies of true religion are fighting under the semblance of friendship, is announced in an oracular voice from God: "Cast thy care upon Jehovah, for he will sustain thee; he will not suffer the just one to be tossed about for ever."—*R. H. Ryland.*

Verse 22.—"*Cast thy burden upon the Lord,*" etc. The best way to ease thyself is to lay thy load upon God; he will take it up and also carry thee. There is many a man would be willing to go of himself, if another would but carry his burden for him; but if thou throwest thy burden upon God he will not only carry that, but will also carry thee. He cares not how much weight a Christian layeth on his back; a true Israelite may ease himself, and best please his God at once. God delights not to see tears in thine eyes, or paleness in thy countenance; thy groans and sighs make no music in his ears. He had rather that thou wouldst free thyself of thy burden by casting it upon him, that he might rejoice in thy joy and comfort. Now, true confidence in God, and resting upon God, will both free thee of thy burden and also bring in the strength of God to sustain and bear thee up from falling. Wouldst thou, therefore, own God as thy strength, and fetch strength from God to thy soul? rest upon God, roll thyself upon him, and that, 1. In time of greatest weakness. 2. In time of greatest service. 3. In times of greatest trials.—*Samuel Blackerby*, 1674.

* A right Judas.

Verse 22.—"*Cast thy burden*" on him in the same way that the ship in a storm casts her burden on the anchor, which anchor holds on to its sure fixing place. And to my mind, that is the more beautiful sense of the two—a sense which once entered into, may be followed out in these glorious verses:—

> And I see the good ship riding, all in a perilous road;
> The low reef booming on her lee; the swell of ocean poured
> Sea after sea, from stem to stern; the mainmast by the board;
> The bulwarks down; the rudder gone; the boats stove by the chains.
> But courage still, brave mariners, the ANCHOR yet remains:
> And he will flinch—no, never an inch—until ye pitch sky high;
> Then he moves his head, as if he said, "Fear nought; for here am I!"

J. M. Neale's Commentary.

Verse 23.—"*Shalt bring them down.*" Indicating a violent death, like that of the slain ox, which is said to *descend*, when it falls under the stroke. The *pit* of *putrefaction* is meant, in which the corpse decays, nor does it here merely denote the sepulchre, but the ignominious condition of a corpse cast forth, as when it is thrown into a pit.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 23.—"*Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.*"—A wicked man never lives out half his days; for either he is cut off before he hath lived half the course of nature, or he is cut off before he hath lived a quarter of the course of his desires; either he lives not half so long as he might, or not a tenth, not a hundredth part so long as he would; and therefore let him die when he will, his death is full of terror, trouble, and confusion, because he dies out of season. He never kept time or season with God, and surely God will not keep or regard his time or season.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 23.—"*Half their days.*" In the Jewish account threescore years was the age of a man, and death at any time before that was looked upon as untimely, and deemed and styled פרת excision, of which they made thirty-six degrees; so that *not to live out half one's days*, is in their style *to die before thirty years old.*—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 23 (*second clause*).—The more sins we do commit, the more we hasten our own death; because as the wise man saith, "The fear of the Lord prolongeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened" (Prov. x. 27); and the prophet David saith, "*Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days;*" for sin is an epitomiser or shortener of everything: it consumes our wealth, it confines our liberty, it impeacheth our health, and it abbreviateth our life, and brings us speedily unto our graves.—*Griffith Williams*, 1636.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1 (*second clause*).—I. An evil to be dreaded: "*Hide not thyself*," etc. 1. By long delay in an urgent case. 2. In the sinner's case by refusing to hear altogether. II. Causes which may produce it. 1. In the man. 2. In the prayer itself. 3. In the manner of the prayer. III. Evils which will follow—a list which the preacher can readily think of. IV. Remedies for the evil. There is none if it should continue; but heart-searching, repentance, importunity, pleading the name of Jesus, etc., will lead to its removal.

Verse 2.—The Great Hearer. I. What address shall we present to him? II. What sort of attention do we desire? III. How shall we secure it? IV. What is the reflex duty on our part?—To attend and hear him

Verse 2 (*second clause*).—Allowable complaining. I. Not *of* God but *to* God II. Mainly of ourselves. III. Of the world as against God and right. IV Ever with holy grief, and not selfish vexation.

Verse 4.—The terrors of death. See Sermon by *Grove* in the Notes.

Verse 7.—Solitude. I. Its fancied benefits. II. Its sore temptations. III. Its occasional benefits. IV. Its sweet solaces.

Verse 8.—Too hasty a flight from trial. 1. Would show rebellion against God. 2. Would manifest cowardly want of faith. 3. Would involve loss of useful experience. 4. Would land us in other and worse trials. 5. Would prevent our glorifying God. 6. Would mar our conformity to Christ and fellowship with his people. 7. Would lessen the value of heaven.

Verse 9 (*first clause*).—The Babel of heresies. *Essential*, for truth is one. *Inevitable*, for the motives of heretics clash. *Providential*, for so they weaken each other. *Judicial*, for so they torment each other.

Verse 10 (*first clause*).—The activity of evil.

Verse 10 (*second clause*).—The diabolical twins, or cause and effect.

Verse 14.—The social companionships which grow out of religion. 1. They are on a good foundation. 2. They yield profit—"counsel." 3. They yield pleasure—"sweet." 4. They lead to enthusiasm—"walked in company." 5. They ought to be sacredly maintained. 6. But they need to be carefully watched.

Verse 16.—The contrast. I. A child of God will not wrong others as they do him. II. He will call upon God as they do not. III. God will hear him as he does not the wicked. IV. God will deal with him at last otherwise than with them.

Verse 17. 1.—David will pray fervently; "*I will pray and cry aloud.*" 2. He will pray frequently; every day, and three times a-day, evening, and morning, and at noon.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 18.—Our battles, our almost rout, our helper, our deliverances, our praise.

Verse 19.—The eternal government of God a threat to the ungodly.

Verse 19 (*second part*).—Prosperity creating atheism. This involves—1. Ingratitude—they ought to be the more devout. 2. Impudence—they think themselves as God. 3. Forgetfulness—they forget that changes will come. 4. Ignorance—they know not that unbroken prosperity is often for awhile the portion of the accursed. 5. Insanity—for there is no reason in their conduct. 6. Rottenness—preparing them to be cast away for ever.

Verse 21.—The hypocrite's mouth. 1. It has many words. 2. They are only from his mouth. 3. They are very smooth. 4. They conceal rather than reveal his purposes. 5. They are cutting and killing. 6. They will kill himself.

Verse 22 (*first clause*).—Here we see the believer has—1. A *burden* to try him. 2. A *duty* to engage him, "Cast thy burden," etc. 3. A *promise* to encourage him, "He shall sustain," etc.—*Ebenezer Temple*, 1850.

Verse 22 (*last clause*).—Who are the righteous? What is meant by their being moved? Whose permission is needful to accomplish it? Will he give it? "Never." Why not?

Verse 23 (*last clause*).—The grand "I WILL." Sum up the Psalm.—When I pray, 1—3. II. When I faint, 4—7. III. When I am sore beset, 9—11. IV. When I am betrayed, 12—14, 20, 21. V. When others perish, 15. VI. After I am delivered, 18. VII. In every condition, 22.

WORK UPON THE FIFTY-FIFTH PSALM.

In CHANDLER'S "*Life of David*," Vol. II., pp. 305—315, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.

PSALM LVI.

TITLE.—To the Chief Musician. *That mighty minstrel by degrees acquired a noble repertoire of hallowed songs, and set them all to music.* Upon Jonath-elem-rechokim—*this was probably the title of the tune, as we should say Old Hundred, or Sicilian Mariners. Perhaps the title may however belong to the Psalm, and if so it is instructive, for it has been translated "the silent dove in distant places." We have here the songs of God's servant, who rejoices once more to return from banishment, and to leave those dangerous places where he was compelled to hold his peace even from good. There is such deep spiritual knowledge in this Psalm that we might say of it, "Blessed art thou David Bar-jonas, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee." When David plays the Jonah he is not like the prophet of that name; in David the love of the dove predominates, but in Jonah its moaning and complaining are most notable.* Michtam of David. *This is the second golden Psalm, we had the first in Psalm* xvi., *to which this Psalm has a great likeness, especially in its close, for it ends in the joyful presence. A golden mystery, the gracious secret of the life of faith is in both these Psalms most sweetly unveiled, and a pillar is set up because of God's truth.* When the Philistines took him in Gath. *He was then like a dove in strangers' hands, and on his escape he records his gratitude.*

DIVISIONS.—*In verses* 1 *and* 2, *he pours out his complaint; in verses* 3 *and* 4 *he declares his confidence in God; in verses* 5 *and* 6 *he returns to his complaining, but pleads with earnest hope in verses* 7—9, *and sings a grateful song from verse* 10 *to the close.*

EXPOSITION.

BE merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me.

2 Mine enemies would daily swallow *me* up: for *they be* many that fight against me, O thou most High.

"*Be merciful unto me, O God.*" In my deep distress my soul turns to thee, my God. Man has no mercy on me, therefore double thy mercy to me. If thy justice has let loose my enemies, let thy mercy shorten their chain. It is sweet to see how the tender dove-like spirit of the psalmist flies to the tenderest attribute for succour in the hour of peril. "*For man would swallow me up.*" He is but thy creature, a mere man, yet like a monster he is eager for blood, he pants, he gapes for me; he would not merely wound me, or feed on my substance, but he would fain swallow me altogether, and so make an end of me. The open mouths of sinners when they rage against us should open our mouths in prayer. We may plead the cruelty of men as a reason for the divine interposition—a father is soon aroused when his children are shamefully entreated. "*He fighting daily oppresseth me.*" He gives me no interval—he fights daily. He is successful in his unrighteous war—he oppresses me, he crushes me, he presses me sore. David has his eye on the leader of his foes, and lays his plaint against him in the right place. If we may thus plead against man, much more against that great enemy of souls, the devil. We ask the Lord to forgive us our trespasses, which is another way of saying, "Be merciful unto me, O God," and then we say, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." The more violent the attack of Satan the stronger our plea for deliverance.

2. "*Mine enemies would daily swallow me up.*" Their appetite for blood never fails them. With them there is no truce or armistice. They are many,

but one mind animates them. Nothing I can do can make them relent. Unless they can quite devour me they will never be content. The ogres of nursery tales exist in reality in the enemies of the church, who would crush the bones of the godly, and make a mouthful of them if they could. "*For they be many that fight against me.*" Sinners are gregarious creatures. Persecutors hunt in packs. These wolves of the church seldom come down upon us singly. The number of our foes is a powerful plea for the interposition of the one Defender of the faithful, who is mightier than all their bands. These foes of the gracious are also keen-eyed, and ever on the watch, hence the margin calls them "observers." "*O thou most High.*" Thus he invokes against the lofty ones of the earth the aid of one who is higher than the highest. Some translate the words differently, and think that the writer means that his foes assailed him from the high places in which pride and power had placed them. Saul, his great foe, attacked him from his throne with all the force which his high position placed at his disposal: our comfort in such a case is near to hand, for God will help us from a higher place than our proudest foes can occupy. The greatness of God as the Most High is a fertile source of consolation to weak saints oppressed by mighty enemies.

3 What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.
4 In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.

"*What time I am afraid.*" David was no braggart, he does not claim never to be afraid, and he was no brutish Stoic free from fear because of the lack of tenderness. David's intelligence deprived him of the stupid heedlessness of ignorance, he saw the imminence of his peril, and was afraid. We are men, and therefore liable to overthrow; we are feeble, and therefore unable to prevent it; we are sinful men, and therefore deserving it, and for all these reasons we are afraid. But the condition of the psalmist's mind was complex—he feared, but that fear did not fill the whole area of his mind, for he adds, "*I will trust in thee.*" It is possible, then, for fear and faith to occupy the mind at the same moment. We are strange beings, and our experience in the divine life is stranger still. We are often in a twilight, where light and darkness are both present, and it is hard to tell which predominates. It is a blessed fear which drives us to trust. Unregenerate fear drives from God, gracious fear drives to him. If I fear man I have only to trust God, and I have the best antidote. To trust when there is no cause for fear, is but the name of faith, but to be reliant upon God when occasions for alarm are abundant and pressing, is the conquering faith of God's elect. Though the verse is in the form of a resolve, it became a fact in David's life, let us make it so in ours. Whether the fear arise from without or within, from past, present, or future, from temporals, or spirituals, from men or devils, let us maintain faith, and we shall soon recover courage.

4. "*In God I will praise his word.*" Faith brings forth praise. He who can trust will soon sing. God's promise, when fulfilled, is a noble subject for praise, and even before fulfilment it should be the theme of song. It is in or through God that we are able to praise. We praise as well as pray in the Spirit. Or we may read it—in extolling the Lord one of the main points for thanksgiving is his revealed will in the Scriptures, and the fidelity with which he keeps his word of promise. "*In God I have put my trust.*" Altogether and alone should we stay ourselves on God. What was a gracious resolve in the former verse, is here asserted as already done. "*I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.*" Faith exercised, fear is banished, and holy triumph ensues, so that the soul asks, "What can flesh do unto me?" What indeed? He can do me no real injury; all his malice shall be overruled for my good. Man is flesh, flesh is grass—Lord, in thy name I defy its utmost wrath. There were two verses of complaint, and here are two of confidence; it is well to weigh out a sufficient quantity of the sweet to counteract the sour.

5 Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts *are* against me for evil.

6 They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.

5. "*Every day they wrest my words.*" This is a common mode of warfare among the ungodly. They put our language on the rack, they extort meanings from it which it cannot be made fairly to contain. Thus our Saviour's prophecy concerning the temple of his body, and countless accusations against his servants, were founded on wilful perversions. They who do this every day become great adepts in the art. A wolf can always find in a lamb's discourse a reason for eating him. Prayers are blasphemies if you choose to read them the wrong way upwards. "*All their thoughts are against me for evil.*" No mixture of good will tone down their malice. Whether they viewed him as a king, a psalmist, a man, a father, a warrior, a sufferer, it was all the same, they saw through coloured glass, and could not think a generous thought towards him. Even those actions of his which were an undoubted blessing to the commonwealth, they endeavoured to undervalue. Oh, foul spring, from which never a drop of pure water can come!

6. "*They gather themselves together.*" Firebrands burn the fiercer for being pushed together. They are afraid to meet the good man till their numbers place terrible odds against him. Come out, ye cowards, man by man, and fight the old hero! No, ye wait till ye are assembled like thieves in bands, and even then ye waylay the man. There is nothing brave about you. "*They hide themselves.*" In ambuscade they wait their opportunity. Men of malice are men of cowardice. He who dares not meet his man on the king's highway, writes himself down a villain. Constantly are the reputations of good men assailed with deep-laid schemes, and diabolical plots, in which the anonymous enemies stab in the dark. "*They mark my steps,*" as hunters mark the trail of their game, and so track them. Malicious men are frequently very sharp-sighted to detect the failings, or supposed failings, of the righteous. Spies and *mouchards* are not all in the pay of earthly governments, some of them will have wages to take in red-hot coin from one who himself is more subtle than all the beasts of the field. "*When they wait for my soul.*" Nothing less than his life would content them, only his present and eternal ruin could altogether glut them. The good man is no fool, he sees that he has enemies, and that they are many and crafty; he sees also his own danger, and then he shows his wisdom by spreading the whole case before the Lord, and putting himself under divine protection.

7 Shall they escape by iniquity? in *thine* anger cast down the people, O God.

8 Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: *are they* not in thy book?

9 When I cry *unto thee,* then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God *is* for me.

7. "*Shall they escape by iniquity?*" Will such wickedness as this stand them in good stead? Can it be that this conduct shall enable them to avoid the sentence of earthly punishment? They slander the good man to screen themselves—will this avail them? They have cunningly managed hitherto, but will there not be an end to their games? "*In thine anger cast down the people, O God.*" Trip them up in their tricks. Hurl them from the Tarpeian rock. A persecuted man finds a friend even in an angry God, how much more in the God of love! When men seek to cast us down, it is but natural and not at all unlawful to pray that they may be disabled from the accomplishment of their infamous designs. What God often does we may safely ask him to do.

8. "*Thou tellest my wanderings.*" Every step which the fugitive had taken when pursued by his enemies, was not only observed but thought worthy of counting and recording. We perhaps are so confused after a long course of trouble, that we hardly know where we have or where we have not been; but the omniscient and considerate Father of our spirits remembers all in detail, for he has counted them over as men count their gold, for even the trial of our faith is precious in his sight. "*Put thou my tears into thy bottle.*" His sorrows were so many that there would need a great wine-skin to hold them all. There is no allusion to the little complimentary lachrymatories of fashionable and fanciful Romans, it is a robuster metaphor by far; such floods of tears had David wept that a leathern bottle would scarce hold them. He trusts that the Lord will be so considerate of his tears as to store them up as men do the juice of the vine, and he hopes that the place of storage will be a special one—"*thy* bottle not *a* bottle. "*Are they not in thy book?*" Yes, they are recorded there, but let not only the record but the grief itself be present to thee. Look on my griefs as real things, for these move the heart more than a mere account, however exact. How condescending is the Lord! How exact his knowledge of us! How generous his estimations! How tender his regard!

9. "*When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back.*" So soon as I pray they shall fly. So surely as I cry they shall be put to the rout.

> "So swift is prayer to reach the sky,
> So kind is God to me."

The machinery of prayer is not always visible, but it is most efficient. God inclines us to pray, we cry in anguish of heart, he hears, he acts, the enemy is turned back. What irresistible artillery is this which wins the battle as soon as its report is heard! What a God is this who hearkens to the cry of his children, and in a moment delivers them from the mightiest adversaries! "*This I know.*" This is one of the believer's certainties, his axioms, his infallible, indisputable verities. "*For God is for me.*" This we know, and we know, therefore, that none can be against us who are worth a moment's fear. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Who will restrain prayer when it is so potent? Who will seek any other ally than God, who is instantly present so soon as we give the ordained signal, by which we testify both our need and our confidence?

10 In God will I praise *his* word: in the LORD will I praise *his* word.

11 In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

12 Thy vows *are* upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee.

13 For thou hast delivered my soul from death: *wilt* not *thou deliver* my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?

10. "*In God will I praise his word.*" Now comes the thanksgiving. He is a wretch who, having obtained help, forgets to return a grateful acknowledgment. The least we can do is to praise him from whom we receive such distinguished favours. Does David here mean "by God's grace I will praise him"? If so, he shows us that all our emotions towards God must be in God, produced by him and presented as such. Or does he mean, "that which in God is most the object of my praise is his word, and the faithfulness with which he keeps it"? If so, we see how attached our hearts should be to the sure word of promise, and especially to *him* who is the WORD incarnate. The Lord is to be praised under every aspect, and in all his attributes and acts, but certain mercies more peculiarly draw out our admiration towards special portions of the great whole

That praise which is never special in its direction cannot be very thoughtful, and it is to be feared cannot be very acceptable. "*In the Lord will I praise his word.*" He delights to dwell on his praise, he therefore repeats his song. The change by which he brings in the glorious name of Jehovah is doubtless meant to indicate that under every aspect he delights in his God and in his word.

11. "*In God have I put my trust.*" This and the former verse are evidently the chorus of the Psalm. We cannot be too careful of our faith, or see too sedulously that it is grounded on the Lord alone. "*I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.*" Faith has banished fear. He views his foes in their most forcible character, calling them not *flesh*, but indicating them as *man*, yet he dreads them not; though the whole race were his enemies he would not be afraid now that his trust is stayed on God. He is not afraid of what they threaten to do, for much of that they cannot do; and even what is in their power, what they *can do*, he defies with holy daring. He speaks for the future, "I will not," for he is sure that the security of the present will suffice for days to come.

12. "*Thy vows are upon me, O God.*" Vows made in his trouble he does not lightly forget, nor should we. We voluntarily made them, let us cheerfully keep them. All professed Christians are men under vows, but especially those who in hours of dire distress have re-dedicated themselves unto the Lord. "*I will render praises unto thee.*" With heart, and voice, and gift, we should cheerfully extol the God of our salvation. The practice of making solemn vows in times of trouble is to be commended, when it is followed by the far less common custom of fulfilling them when the trouble is over.

13. "*For thou hast delivered my soul from death.*" His enemies were defeated in their attempts upon his life, and therefore he vowed to devote his life to God. "*Wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling?*" One mercy is a plea for another, for indeed it may happen that the second is the necessary complement of the first. It little boots that we live, if we are made to fall in character by the thrusts of our enemies. As lief not be, as live to be bereft of honour, and fallen prostrate before my enemies. "*That I may walk before God in the light of the living,*" enjoying the favour and presence of God, and finding the joy and brightness of life therein. Walking at liberty, in holy service, in sacred communion, in constant progress in holiness, enjoying the smile of heaven—this I seek after. Here is the loftiest reach of a good man's ambition, to dwell with God, to walk in righteousness before him, to rejoice in his presence, and in the light and glory which it yields. Thus in this short Psalm, we have climbed from the ravenous jaws of the enemy into the light of Jehovah's presence, a path which only faith can tread.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—The words "*Jonath-elem-rechokim*" may be rendered, *concerning the mute dove among them that are afar off*, or *in far places.—John Gill.*

Title.—"*Michtam.*" See also Explanatory Notes on Psalm xvi., in the "Treasury of David," Vol. I., pp. 222-23.

Verse 1.—"*Be merciful.*" This is the second of the Psalms beginning with the miserere; the fifty-first being the first of them.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 1.—"*Be merciful unto me, O God.*" This is to me the one source of all my expectations, the one fountain of all promises: *Miserere mei, Deus, miserere mei.—Bernard*, 1091—1157.

Verse 1.—"*Be merciful.*" His first wrestling in prayer is with the check of his conscience, whether for his daily sins, or in particular for casting himself in such apparent danger, as to have ventured without probable security, to seek shelter among the enemies of the people of God, whose blood he himself had shed abundantly; for this rashness or other sins he beggeth mercy.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 1.—"*Man.*" He uses the indefinite term *man* in this verse, though in the next he speaks of having many enemies, the more forcibly to express the truth, that the whole world was combined against him, that he experienced no humanity amongst men, and stood in the last necessity of divine help.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 1.—"*Would swallow me up.*" *Soop me up* (as the Hebrew word soundeth); make but one draught of me, or suck me in as a whirlpool, swallow me up as a ravenous wild beast.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 1.—"*He fighting daily.*" There is no morning on which we can arise and go forth into the world, and say, "No enemy will come out against me to-day." There is no night in which we can retire from that world, and think to find safety in the solitude of our own chambers, and say, "No evil can enter here."—*Barton Bouchier, in "Manna in the Heart,"* 1855.

Verses 1, 2.—The same words are applicable to the situation and circumstances of David, pursued by his enemies; of Christ, persecuted by the Jews; of the church, afflicted in the world; and of the soul, encompassed by enemies, against whom she is forced to wage perpetual war.—*George Horne.*

Verse 2.—"*O thou most High.*" The Hebrew is not that rendered "*Most High*" in Ps. vii. 17; nor in our version is it ever rendered "*Most High*" in any other place, although found in the Hebrew Bible more than *fifty* times. There are but two other places where it is applied, as an epithet, to God; Ps. xcii. 8; Mic. vi. 6. It is commonly rendered, *from above, on high, high places, high*; once *loftily*, Ps. lxxiii. 8. . . . The probable meaning is, they "fight against me from the high places of authority, both in Jerusalem and in Gath," *q.d.*, mine enemies are in power.—*William S. Plumer's "Studies in the Book of Psalms,"* 1867.

Verse 3.—"*What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.*" There is nothing like faith to help at a pinch; faith dissolves doubts as the sun drives away the mists. And that you may not be put out, know that your time for believing is always. There are times when some graces may be out of use, but there is no time wherein faith can be said to be so. Wherefore faith must be always in exercise. Faith is the eye, is the mouth, is the hand, and one of these is of use all the day long. Faith is to see, to receive, to work, or to eat; and a Christian should be seeing or receiving, or working, or feeding all day long. Let it rain, let it blow, let it thunder, let it lighten, a Christian must still believe. "At what time," said the good man, "I am afraid, I will trust in thee."—*John Bunyan.*

Verse 3.—"*What time I am afraid,*" etc. A divine spark may live in a smoke of doubts without a speedy rising into a flame. When grace is at the bottom of doubting, there will be reliance on Christ and lively petitions to him. Peter's faith staggers when he began to sink, but he casts a look and sends forth a cry to his Saviour, acknowledging his sufficiency; Matt. xiv. 30, "Lord, save me." Sometimes those doubtings strengthen our trust and make us take hold faster on God. Ps. lvi. 3, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." This was a fear of himself or others, rather than a jealousy of God. Had he had unworthy suspicions of him, he would not have trusted him; he would not have run for remedy to the object of his fear. The waverings where faith is, are like the tossings of a ship fast at anchor (still there is a relying upon God), not like a boat carried by the waves of the sea to be dashed against a rock. If the heart stay on Christ in the midst of those doubtings, it is not an evil heart of unbelief. Such doubtings consist with the indwelling of the Spirit, who is in the heart, to perform the office of a Comforter against such fears and to expel those thick fumes of nature.—*Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 3.—"*What time I am afraid,*" etc. I know not what to do, but I'll try my old way, 'tis good for me to draw near still; I'll do so still as I use to do; I'll cast myself down upon the free grace of Christ in the promises; I'll

lay the weight of my sinking spirit there, I'll renew my hold, life, expectation there; this is my old path, I'll never be turned or beaten out here. This Christian in his strength may challenge all the gates of hell. This was David's course (Ps. lxxi. 5), "Thou art my trust from my youth," etc. Thence was it that he could say, "*What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee:*" his shield and sword was always in his hand, therefore he could make use of it when fear and inward trouble offered themselves. "*Afraid!*" alas, who is not? but what course will you take then? Even what course you used to take, *i.e.*, believe; use faith always; and have it now.—*Elias Pledger* (—1676), *in* "*Morning Exercises.*"

Verse 3.—"*What time,*" etc. Literally, "*What day.*" As "Man *daily* oppresseth me" (ver. 1), so "Every *day*, when I am afraid, I trust in thee."—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 3.—It is a good maxim with which to go into a world of danger; a good maxim to go to sea with; a good maxim in a storm; a good maxim when in danger on the land; a good maxim when we are sick; a good maxim when we think of death and the judgment—"*What time I am afraid,* I WILL TRUST IN THEE."—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 3.—"*I will trust in thee.*" Faith and fear stand together; and so fear and love.—*John Richardson,* —1654.

Verses 3, 4.—Sometimes faith comes from prayer in triumph, and cries, *Victoria.* It gives such a being and existence to the mercy prayed for in the Christian's soul, before any likelihood of it appears to sense and reason, that the Christian can silence all his troubled thoughts with the expectation of its coming. So Hannah prayed, "and was no more sad." 1 Samuel i, 18. Yea, it will make the Christian disburse his praises for the mercy long before it is received. Thus high faith wrought in David. "*At what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee,*" and in the next words, "*In God I will praise his word;*" that is, he would praise God for his promise before there was any performance of it to him, when it had no existence but in God's faithfulness and David's faith. This holy man had such a piercing eye of faith, that he could see the promise when he was at the lowest ebb of misery, so certain and unquestionable in the power and truth of God, that he could then praise God as if the promised mercy had been actually fulfilled to him.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 4.—"*In God I will praise his word.*" Or, praise him for his word; for the whole Scripture that was then in being.—*John Gill.*

Verse 4.—The best hold that faith can have of God, is to take him by "*his word,*" however his dispensation seems to be; this will give satisfaction at length; for "*In God I will praise his word,*" is as much as to say, albeit he withhold comfort and deliverance from me, so that I cannot find what I would, yet let me have "*his word,*" and I will give him the glory of all his attributes.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 4.—"*I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.*" Fear not man, he is but flesh. Thou needest not, thou oughtest not to fear. Thou needest not. What, not such a great man; not such a number of men, who have the keys of all the prisons at their girdle; who can kill or save alive? No, not these; only look they be thy enemies for righteousness' sake. Take heed thou makest not the least child thine enemy, by offering wrong to him; God will right the wicked even upon the saint. If he offends he shall find no shelter under God's wing for his sin. This made Jerome complain that the Christians' sin made the arms of those barbarous nations which invaded Christendom victorious: *Nostris peccatis fortes sunt barbari.* But if man's wrath find thee in God's way, and his fury take fire at thy holiness, thou needest not fear though thy life be the prey he hunts for. Flesh can only wound flesh; he may kill thee, but not hurt thee. Why shouldest thou fear to be stripped of that which thou hast resigned already to Christ? It is the first lesson thou learnest, if a Christian, to deny thyself, take up thy

cross, and follow thy Master; so that the enemy comes too late; thou hast no life to lose, because thou hast given it already to Christ; nor can man take away that without God's leave; all thou hast is insured; and though God hath not promised thee immunity from suffering in this kind, yet he hath undertaken to bear the loss, yea, to pay thee a hundredfold, and thou shalt not stay for it till another world. Again, thou oughtest not to fear flesh. Our Saviour (Matt. x.) thrice, in the compass of six verses, commands us not to fear man: if thy heart quail at him, how wilt thou behave thyself in the list against Satan, whose little finger is heavier than man's loins? The Romans had *arma prælusoria*, weapons related, or cudgels, which they were tried at before they came to the sharp. If thou canst not bear a bruise in thy flesh from man's cudgels and blunt weapons, what wilt thou do when thou shalt have Satan's sword in thy side? God counts himself reproached when his children fear a sorry man; therefore we are bid sanctify the Lord, not to fear their fear.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 4.—"*I will not fear*," etc. Eusebius tells us of a notable speech that Ignatius used when he was in his enemies' hands, not long before he was to suffer, which argued a raised spirit to a wonderful height above the world, and above himself. "I care," says he, "for nothing visible or invisible, that I might get Christ. Let fire, the cross, the letting out of beasts upon me, breaking of my bones, the tearing of my members, the grinding of my whole body, and the torments of the devils come upon me, so be it I may get Christ.—*From Jeremiah Burroughs' "Moses his Self-denyall,"* 1649.

Verse 4.—"*What flesh can do*," etc. It is according to the phrase of Scripture, when it would speak contemptibly of man and show him to be the lowest creature, to call him "flesh," to set forth the weakness that man is subject to.—*John Arrowsmith*, 1600—1660.

Verse 4 (*last clause*).—*Fear of man*—grim idol, bloody mouthed; many souls has he devoured and trampled down into hell! His eyes are full of hatred to Christ's disciples. Scoffs and jeers lurk in his eye. The laugh of the scorner growls in his throat. Cast down this idol. This keeps some of you from secret prayer, from worshipping God in your family, from going to lay your case before ministers, from openly confessing Christ. You that have felt God's love and Spirit, dash this idol to pieces. "Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die?" "Fear not, thou worm Jacob." "What have I to do any more with idols?"—*Robert Murray M'Cheyne*, 1813—1843.

Verse 4.—Faith groweth valiant in fight; albeit it began like a coward, and staggered in the first conflict, yet it groweth stout, incontinent, and pulls its adversaries under foot: "*In God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verse 5.—"*Every day they wrest my words;*" or, they put my words to pain and grief, or, they painfully and grievously wrest my words. David's enemies took up what he spake, and put a new shape upon it; and this they did so vexingly, that they are said to "*wrest*" his words: a thing is vexed when it is wrested or wrought quite out of the form it before had. The same metaphor the apostle Peter useth in reference to doctrine, speaking of the Epistles of Paul, in which "are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable *wrest*," or put upon the rack; they painfully form his words, and represent them in a meaning which he never intended. 2 Pet. iii. 16. What is spoken may be right both in the matter and intendment of the speaker, yet another wrests, forms and fashions it in his own mould, and makes it bear a sense which the speaker never dreamed of.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 5.—"*Every day they wrest my words*," etc. Mr. Jewel, the Bishop of Salisbury, who, according to his life, died most godly and patiently, at the point of death used the versicle of the Hymn, "Te Deum," "O Lord, in thee have I trusted, let me never be confounded," whereupon, suppressing the rest, they

published, that the principal champion of the heretics, in his very last words, cried he was confounded.—*Lord Bacon's "Bible Thoughts.*

Verse 5.—"*They wrest my words.*" Whatever Christ said in justification of himself was twisted to a meaning injurious to him. So it is still in the world, self-justification by words answers but little purpose with ungodly men.—*W. Wilson, D.D.*, 1860.

Verse 6.—"*They mark my steps.*" Go whither I will, they are at my heels.—*William Nicholson* (—1671), *in* "*David's Harp Strung and Tuned.*"

Verse 8.—"*Put thou my tears in thy bottle.*" Among other things in the collection of Mr. Abbott, of Cairo, he had a lachrymatory, or tear bottle, which had been found in a tomb at Thebes. This interested me very much. The custom in old times was, when a person was ill, or in great distress, for his friends to go to see him, and take with them a tear bottle. Then, as the tears rolled down the cheeks of the sufferer, they were caught in these bottles, sealed up, and preserved as a memorial of the event. This is what David referred to in Psalm lvi. 8. "*Put thou my tears into thy bottle.*" But it implies much more than at first suggests itself, and much more than I can attempt to write. For instance, it is as if David had said, "Visit me, and behold my tears;" ("O visit me with thy salvation!") for without such *visit* there could be no bottling of his tears. "Thou tellest my wanderings; O visit me, and behold my anguish; put my tears into thy bottle," for "they have been my meat day and night." Psalm xlii. 3. "Keep them before thee, by way of remembrance, and when thou seest the bottle, O think of him whose tears it contains. Are they not in thy book?" That is, God's book of remembrance, that was written for those "who thought upon his name" (Mal. iii. 16), just as the kings of old used to keep a book of chronicles of important events. See Esther vi. 1—11.—*John Gadsby*, 1860.

[We insert this to show what has been said by others; but we do not think there is the slightest allusion to this piece of *Roman* etiquette in this text.—*C. H. S.*]

Verse 8.—"*My tear:*" the singular used collectively. "*In thy bottle:*" as if one should say, take care of my tears, as of a kind of wine that is very costly, and very pleasant to thee; or, that hereafter you may measure out to me just that quantity of joys: a metaphor from the keeper of a vineyard, who receives into his vessel the drops of the grapes pressed out by the wine-press of affliction. The word נֹאד (*uter**) denotes the manner in which they preserved their wine. (1 Samuel xvi. 20; Joshua ix. 4, 13), and milk also (Judges iv. 19).—*Martin Geier.*

Verse 8.—"*Put thou my tears into thy bottle.*" What a sweet thought is suggested here of God's remembrance of his peoples' affliction! It is an interesting figure of speech, of *bottling their tears.* But the sense is, they are remembered. And woe will be to the man that offends one of God's little ones on his account. What are now bottles of tears, will be poured out in the end as so many vials of wrath. But reader! think how the tears of Jesus have been treasured up when shedding for the sins of his people.—*Robert Hawker*, 1753—1827.

Verse 8.—"*Put thou my tears into thy bottle.*" It is the witty observation of one, that God is said in Scripture to have a bag and a bottle, a *bag* for our sins, and a *bottle* for our tears; and that we should help to fill this, as we have that. There is an allusion here in the original that cannot be Englished.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 8.—"*Are they not in thy book?*" While we remain in this vale of misery, God keeps all our tears in a bottle; so precious is the water that is distilled from penitent eyes: and because he will be sure not to fail, he notes how many drops there be in his register. It was a precious ointment

*Leather or skin bottle.

wherewith the woman in the Pharisee's house (it is thought Mary Magdalene) anointed the feet of Christ; but her *tears*, wherewith she washed them, were more worth than her spikenard.—*Abraham Wright, in "A Practical Commentary or Exposition upon the Book of Psalms,"* 1661.

Verse 9.—"*When I cry.*" The cry of faith and prayer to God is more dreadful to our spiritual foes than the war-whoop of the Indian is to his surprised brother savages.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 9 (*first clause*).—It was somewhat that when David prayed he was saved from his enemies. "I will call on the Lord: so shall I be saved from mine enemies" (2 Sam. xxii. 4); there is the *defensive* power of prayer; but it is more that it puts enemies to the foil. "*When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back*" and be put to flight: there is the *offensive* power of prayer. In David's tower there was an armoury, *thalpijoth*, a place to hang swords with two edges, swords with two mouths (Cant. iv. 4); a defensive and an offensive edge. Both edges must be used by such as seek safety. Prayer is a sword with two edges. "Put up thy sword into his place," says Christ to Peter; "for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Matt. xxii. 52. But he that takes not this sword may happen to perish by the sword; and the drawing of this sword may save a man from perishing by the sword. Mark that last reason that our Saviour adds why Peter should put up his sword: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (ver. 53.) As if he had said, If it were my mind to confound these mine enemies that now set upon me, I should not need thy sword to do it. I could pray to my Father, and could presently by prayer bring such forces into the field as should rout and scatter all mine enemies: hereby implying, that if he would, he could do his enemies more damage and mischief by his prayers against them than by the sword and all instruments of war. Prayer is *twelve legions* strong, yea, twelve legions of angels strong against enemies.—*Jeremiah Dyke* (1620), *in the Righteous Man's Tower.*

Verse 9.—"*This I know.*" Faith goeth upon solid grounds, and is not a fallible conjecture, but a sure knowledge.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 10.—"*In God will I praise his word: in the Lord will I praise his word.*"—The first word, *Elohim*, is a name belonging to God as a judge, the second word, *Jehovah*, is a name of mercy. I will praise God whether he deal with me in a way of justice or in a way of mercy, when he hath thunder in his voice, as well as when he hath honey under his tongue. Oh, how should we praise God, and pleasure ourselves by such a frame!—*Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 10 (*first clause*).—By the assistance of God I shall be enabled to praise him for the performance of his promises.—*Symon Patrick*, 1626–1707.

Verse 12.—"*Thy vows are upon me, O God.*" Whoever is conversant with the Psalms of David, will find him frequently making *vows*, and careful in paying them. When these words dropt from him he was just delivered out of a pressing danger among the Philistines, with whom he took shelter from the rage of King Saul, who unweariedly pursued him; but he soon found that the remembrance of his past achievements to their damage was still so fresh amongst them, and they so exasperated thereupon, that his life was in constant danger. In his distress he flies to God, his wonted refuge, and sends up earnest addresses to him, *vowing* if he would open a way for his deliverance out of these new straits, he would show his grateful sense of so signal a mercy, by the exactness and accuracy of his future obedience. God hears and succours him; and he thereupon gratefully looks back, endeavours to renew the sense of his former obligation to his great Deliverer, and to stir up himself by suitable returns, and so cries out, "*Thy vows are upon me, O God;*" as if he should say, I resolve, O Lord, not to forget what was transacted while I was under my fears. Thou hast heard my cries, and I own myself firmly bound by my *vows*. I was serious

and in earnest when I made them, and I will endeavour to show that I was so by my care to perform them. "*Thy vows*," O God, made indeed on my part, but justly to be exacted on thine, "*are upon me*," they do in reality hold me fast, and I desire not to be released. I am sensible I deserve to be stigmatised for a perfidious wretch if I ever forget them. This temper of holy David with reference to the *vows* he made on this occasion, should be ours with reference to all the sacred *vows* we any way come under. All Christians, as such, are necessarily under *vows* to the blessed God; and particular circumstances may make it expedient for us to come under special engagements to him. But wherever they are such as that they may justly be denominated *vows of God*, *i.e.*, are such as his word will warrant; we should make holy David, as speaking in this text, our pattern, and set ourselves to imitate him, in seriously owning their binding force, and endeavouring to answer and pay them.—*Edmund Calamy, in "A Practical Discourse Concerning Vows,"* 1704.

Verse 12.—"*Thy vows are upon me, O God.*" A well-composed *vow* will make thee more circumspect and wary in the general course of thy life. Such an influence it hath, as doth more directly work on one particular part, yet is not terminated to that particular only. Thus it was with David. These "*vows*" were made when he was in danger of his life, as it seemeth from verse 13: for when God heard him, he delivered his soul from death: for this he vowed praises in particular, and he will render them. But, withal he takes himself to be hereby engaged to a more exact and circumspect walk before God in all duties; so he expresseth himself in the latter part of verse 13.—*Henry Hurst* (1629—1696), *in "The Morning Exercise at Cripplegate,"* 1661.

Verses 12, 13.—"*Thy vows are upon me, O God.*" Passively, vows made to God, not by God; or the obligations of those vows and prayers which I have made and upon which I have received answers. Sacrifices of thanksgiving were called vows, as having been vowed to God upon the want, and to be paid upon the receipt, of mercy. Lev. i. 1, "If the sacrifice that is offered be a vow." Thy vows are upon me; the fruit of my vows, so that I stand indebted to God for the return of praise. "*Thou hast delivered.*" He understands some great danger wherein he had sunk had not God stood by him, and from a greater mercy, the deliverance of his soul from death, argues for a less, the keeping his feet from falling. "*That I may walk before God in the light of the living.*" By light of the living is meant life, which is called being enlightened with the "light of the living." Job xxxiii. 30. Sometimes eternal life in heaven. John viii. 12, "He that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." "To walk before God." To walk obediently in the sight of God; with a respect to his presence; a walking unto all well pleasing. This is the last argument in the Psalm whereon he builds his strongest plea, as if he knew not what to urge if this should fail him; as if he should have said, Lord, I have had experience of thy wisdom in contriving, thy power in effecting, thy mercy in bestowing deliverance upon me, thy goodness in answering my vows and prayers. "Thou hast delivered from death," a danger as great and unavoidable as death itself. O Lord, art not thou the same as thou wert? Art not thou still as wise to design, and as gracious to confer further mercy? Wilt thou not as certainly also deliver my feet from falling? The one contains his experience, the other the inference or conclusion he draws from it. Mercies received are in a special manner to be remembered. Mercies received are encouragements to ask, and strong grounds to hope for the mercies we want.—*Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 13.—"*From falling*," or, as more literally translated, from a *thrust*, or a *push*, by which one is caused to fall.—*O. Prescott Hiller.*

Verse 13 (*last clause*).—*To walk in the presence of God* is partly under his eyes, his guidance and care, partly in particular, where God is wont to be *present*, where he is *worshipped* by his people and scatters his blessings, opposed to his present state by which he was removed from the place of his worship and presence. Conf. 1 Sam. xxvi. 19, etc. Lastly, *to walk in the light of the living*

denotes in general to live amongst *those who live in the light*, or who enjoy the *light*, as it is said elsewhere, *in the land of the living*—Psalm xxvii. 13; Isaiah xxxviii. 11; liii. 8; Ezekiel xxxii. 32; Psalm cxlii. 6—opposed to the *dead* or *the region of the dead*, who dwell *in darkness*. But in particular it signifies to live in a *safe* and *prosperous* state, whose well-known emblem is *light.—Hermann Venema.*

Verse 13 (*last clause*).—We cannot restrict this phrase to the light of mortal life; David's vows bound him to walk in the *light of spiritual life*, and also in the *light of eternal life*, of which by faith he was a partaker. And most commentators have applied this verse to the *light of glory* in the world to come, as the real and final object of the believer's conversation here on earth.—*W. Wilson, D.D.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verses 2, 3.—I. *Fears are common to all men*, at one time or another. II. *Improper and inefficacious means* of removing fear are often resorted to. III. There is here suggested *a true and effectual method* of removing fear.—*Robert Morrison* (1782—1834), *in "A Parting Memorial."*

Verse 3.—"*What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.*" Whensoever we are afraid of any evil, we are still to put our trust in God. I. What is it to put our trust in God? 1. To keep our hearts from desponding or sinking down under any fears. 2. To comfort ourselves in God. 3. To expect deliverance from him. II. What is there in God we ought to put our trust in? 1. In his promises. 2. In his properties. His power, wisdom, justice, mercy, all-sufficiency. III. Why should we in all our fears put our trust in God? 1. Because there is none else can secure us from our fears. Whereas, 2. There are no fears but God can secure us from them, either by removing the thing feared, or by subduing the fear of the thing.—*Bishop Beveridge.*

Verse 3.—I. There is fear without trust. II. There is trust without fear. III. There is fear and trust united.—*G. R.*

Verse 7.—I. From iniquity there is an escape. II. By iniquity there is no escape. The mercy of God secures the one. The justice of God prevents the other.—*G. R.*

Verse 8.—Here are—I. Manifold mercies, to reclaim from wanderings. II. Tender mercies, putting tears in a bottle. III. Covenant mercies, "Are they not," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 9.—I. God is on the side of his people. II. He is known to be on their side. III. In answer to prayer he appears on their side. IV. When he appears enemies flee. Or—I. The fact, God is for me. II. The knowledge of that fact—"This I know." III. The use of that knowledge—"When I cry," etc. IV. The consequence of that use—"Mine enemies turn back."—*G. R.*

Verse 10.—"I will praise God *for* his word." II. *In* his word, as he is there revealed. III. *By* his word. "Thou hast put a song," etc.

Verse 12.—Here is—I. Past dedication. II. Present consecration. III. Future glorification.—*G. R.*

Verses 12, 13.—You have here—1. The commemoration of former mercies: "Thou hast delivered." 2. The confidence of future: "Wilt not thou." 3. The end of all: "To walk before God in the light of the living."—*Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 13.—I. The language of Gratitude—"Thou hast," etc. II. Of Faith—"Wilt not thou," etc. III. Of Hope—"That I may walk," etc.—*G. R.*

WORK UPON THE FIFTY-SIXTH PSALM.

In CHANDLER'S "*Life of David*," Vol. I., pp. 104—7, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.

PSALM LVII.

TITLE.—To the Chief Musician.—*So glad a song as this becomes ere it closes, should be in the keeping of the most skilled of all the temple minstrels.* Al-taschith, *i.e.*, DESTROY NOT. *This petition is a very sententious prayer, as full as it is brief, and well worthy to be the motto for a sacred song. David had said, "destroy not," in reference to Saul, when he had him in his power, and now he takes pleasure in employing the same words in supplication to God. We may infer from the spirit of the Lord's prayer, that the Lord will spare us as we spare our foes. There are four of these* "Destroy not" *Psalms, namely, the 57th, 58th, 59th, and 75th. In all of them there is a distinct declaration of the destruction of the wicked and the preservation of the righteous, and they all have probably a reference to the overthrow of the Jews, on account of their persecution of the great Son of David: they will endure heavy chastisement, but concerning them it is written in the divine decree, "Destroy them not."* Michtam of David. *For quality this Psalm is called golden, or a secret, and it well deserves the name. We may read the words and yet not know the secret joy of David, which he has locked up in this golden casket.* When he fled from Saul in the cave. *This is a song from the bowels of the earth, and, like Jonah's prayer from the bottom of the sea, it has a taste of the place. The poet is in the shadow of the cave at first, but he comes to the cavern's mouth at last, and sings in the sweet fresh air, with his eye on the heavens, watching joyously the clouds floating therein.*

DIVISIONS.— *We have here prayer,* 1—6, *and praise,* 7—11. *The hunted one takes a long breath of prayer, and when he is fully inspired, he breathes out his soul in jubilant song.*

EXPOSITION.

BE merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until *these* calamities be overpast.

2 I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth *all things* for me.

3 He shall send from heaven, and save me *from* the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.

4 My soul *is* among lions: *and* I lie *even among* them that are set on fire, *even* the sons of men, whose teeth *are* spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.

5 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; *let* thy glory *be* above all the earth.

6 They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen *themselves*. Selah.

1. "*Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me.*" Urgent need suggests the repetition of the cry, for thus intense urgency of desire is expressed. If 'he gives twice who gives quickly,' so he who would receive quickly must ask twice. For mercy the psalmist pleads at first, and he feels he cannot improve upon his plea, and therefore returns to it. God is the God of mercy, and the Father of mercies, it is most fit therefore that in distress we should seek mercy from him in whom it dwells. "*For my soul trusteth in thee.*" Faith urges her suit right well. How can the Lord be unmerciful to a trustful soul? Our faith does not

deserve mercy, but it always wins it from the sovereign grace of God when it is sincere, as in this case where *the soul* of the man believed. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." "*Yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge.*" Not in the cave alone would he hide, but in the cleft of the Rock of ages. As the little birds find ample shelter beneath the parental wing, even so would the fugitive place himself beneath the secure protection of the divine power. The emblem is delightfully familiar and suggestive. May we all experimentally know its meaning. When we cannot see the sunshine of God's face, it is blessed to cower down beneath the shadow of his wings. "*Until these calamities be overpast.*" Evil will pass away, and the eternal wings will abide over us till then. Blessed be God, our calamities are matters of time, but our safety is a matter of eternity. When we are under the divine shadow, the passing over of trouble cannot harm us; the hawk flies across the sky, but this is no evil to the chicks when they are safely nestling beneath the hen.

2. "*I will cry.*" He is quite safe, but yet he prays, for faith is never dumb We pray because we believe. We exercise by faith the spirit of adoption whereby we cry. He says not I do cry, or I have cried, but I will cry, and indeed, this resolution may stand with all of us until we pass through the gates of pearl; for while we are here below we shall still have need to cry. "*Unto God most high*"—Prayers are for God only; the greatness and sublimity of his person and character suggest and encourage prayer: however high our enemies, our heavenly Friend is higher, for he is "*Most high,*" and he can readily send from the height of his power the succour which we need. "*Unto God that performeth all things for me.*" He has cogent reason for praying, for he sees God performing. The believer waits and God works. The Lord has undertaken for us, and he will not draw back, he will go through with his covenant engagements. Our translators have very properly inserted the words, "all things," for there is a blank in the Hebrew, as if it were a *carte blanche*, and you might write therein that the Lord would finish anything and everything which he has begun. Whatsoever the Lord takes in hand he will accomplish; hence past mercies are guarantees for the future, and admirable reasons for continuing to cry unto him.

3. "*He shall send from heaven.*" If there be no fit instruments on earth, heaven shall yield up its legions of angels for the succour of the saints. We may in times of great straits expect mercies of a remarkable kind; like the Israelites in the wilderness, we shall have our bread hot from heaven, new every morning; and for the overthrow of our enemies God shall open his celestial batteries, and put them to utter confusion. Wherever the battle is more fierce than ordinary, there shall come succours from headquarters, for the Commander-in-chief sees all. "*And save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up.*" He will be in time, not only to rescue his servants from being swallowed up, but even from being reproached. Not only shall they escape the flames, but not even the smell of fire shall pass upon them. O dog of hell, I am not only delivered from thy bite, but even from thy bark. Our foes shall not have the power to sneer at us, their cruel jests and taunting gibes shall be ended by the message from heaven, which shall for ever save us. "*Selah.*" Such mercy may well make us pause to meditate and give thanks. Rest, singer, for God has given thee rest! "*God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.*" He asked for mercy, and truth came with it. Thus evermore doth God give us more than we ask or think. His attributes, like angels on the wing, are ever ready to come to the rescue of his chosen.

4. "*My soul is among lions.*" He was a very Daniel. Howled at, hunted, wounded, but not slain. His place was in itself one of extreme peril, and yet faith made him feel himself secure, so that he could lie down. The cave may have reminded him of a lion's den, and Saul and his band shouting and yelling in their disappointment at missing him, were the lions; yet beneath the divine shelter he felt himself safe. "*And I lie even among them that are set on fire.*"

Perhaps Saul and his band kindled a fire in the cavern while they halted in it, and David was thus reminded of the fiercer fire of their hate which burned within their hearts. Like the bush in Horeb, the believer is often in the midst of flames, but never consumed. It is a mighty triumph of faith when we can lie down even among firebrands and find rest, because God is our defence. "*Even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.*" Malicious men carry a whole armoury in their mouths; they have not harmless mouths, whose teeth grind their own food as in a mill, but their jaws are as mischievous as if every tooth were a javelin or an arrow. They have no molars, all their teeth are canine, and their nature is canine, leonine, wolfish, devilish. As for that busy member the tongue, in the case of the malicious, it is a two-edged, keen, cutting, killing sword. The tongue, which is here compared to a sword, has the adjective *sharp* added to it, which is not used in reference to the teeth, which are compared to spears, as if to show that if men were actually to tear us with their teeth, like wild beasts, they could not thereby wound us so severely as they can do with their tongues. No weapon is so terrible as a tongue sharpened on the devil's grindstone; yet even this we need not fear, for "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that riseth against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn."

5. "*Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens.*" This is the chorus of the Psalm. Before he has quite concluded his prayer the good man interjects a verse of praise; and glorious praise too, seeing it comes up from the lion's den and from amid the coals of fire. Higher than the heavens is the Most High, and so high ought our praises to rise. Above even the power of cherubim and seraphim to express it, the glory of God is revealed and is to be acknowledged by us. "*Let thy glory be above all the earth.*" As above, so below, let thy praises, O thou great Jehovah, be universally proclaimed. As the air surrounds all nature, so let thy praises gird the earth with a zone of song.

6. "*They have prepared a net for my steps.*" The enemies of the godly spare no pains, but go about their wicked work with the coolest deliberation. As for each sort of fish, or bird, or beast, a fitting net is needed, so do the ungodly suit their net to their victim's circumstances and character with a careful craftiness of malice. Whatever David might do, and whichever way he might turn, his enemies were ready to entrap him in some way or other. "*My soul is bowed down.*" He was held down like a bird in a trap; his enemies took care to leave him no chance of comfort. "*They have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves.*" He likens the designs of his persecutors to pits, which were commonly dug by hunters to entrap their prey; these were made in the usual path of the victim, and in this case David says, "*before me*," *i.e.*, in my ordinary way. He rejoices because these devices had recoiled upon themselves. Saul hunted David, but David caught him more than once and might have slain him on the spot. Evil is a stream which one day flows back to its source. "*Selah.*" We may sit down at the pit's mouth and view with wonder the just retaliations of providence.

7 My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.

8 Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I *myself* will awake early.

9 I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations.

10 For thy mercy *is* great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.

11 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: *let* thy glory *be* above all the earth.

7. "*My heart is fixed.*" One would have thought he would have said, "My heart is fluttered;" but no, he is calm, firm, happy, resolute, established. When the central axle is secure, the whole wheel is right. If our great bower anchor holds, the ship cannot drive. "*O God, my heart is fixed.*" I am resolved to trust thee, to serve thee, and to praise thee. Twice does he declare this to the glory of God who thus comforts the souls of his servants. Reader, it is surely well with thee, if thy once roving heart is now firmly fixed upon God and the proclamation of his glory. "*I will sing and give praise.*" Vocally and instrumentally will I celebrate thy worship. With lip and with heart will I ascribe honour to thee. Satan shall not stop me, nor Saul, nor the Philistines. I will make Adullam ring with music, and all the caverns thereof echo with joyous song. Believer, make a firm decree that your soul in all seasons shall magnify the Lord.

"Sing, though sense and carnal reason
Fain would stop the joyful song:
Sing, and count it highest treason
For a saint to hold his tongue."

8. "*Awake up, my glory.*" Let the noblest powers of my nature bestir themselves: the intellect which conceives thought, the tongue which expresses it, and the inspired imagination which beautifies it—let all be on the alert now that the hour for praise has come. "*Awake, psaltery and harp.*" Let all the music with which I am familiar be well attuned for the hallowed service of praise. "*I myself will awake early.*" I will awake the dawn with my joyous notes. No sleepy verses and weary notes shall be heard from me; I will thoroughly arouse myself for this high employ. When we are at our best we fall far short of the Lord's deserts, let us, therefore, make sure that what we bring him is our best, and, if marred with infirmity, at least let it not be deteriorated by indolence. Three times the psalmist calls upon himself to awake. Do we need so much arousing, and for such work? Then let us not spare it, for the engagement is too honourable, too needful to be left undone or ill done for want of arousing ourselves.

9. "*I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people.*" Gentiles shall hear my praise. Here is an instance of the way in which the truly devout evangelic spirit o'erleaps the boundaries which bigotry sets up. The ordinary Jew would never wish the Gentile dogs to hear Jehovah's name, except to tremble at it; but this grace-taught psalmist has a missionary spirit, and would spread the praise and fame of his God. "*I will sing unto thee among the nations.*" However far off they may be, I would make them hear of thee through my glad psalmody.

10. "*For thy mercy is great unto the heavens.*" Right up from man's lowliness to heaven's loftiness mercy reaches. Imagination fails to guess the height of heaven, and even thus the riches of mercy exceed our highest thoughts. The psalmist, as he sits at the cave's mouth and looks up to the firmament, rejoices that God's goodness is vaster and sublimer than even the vaulted skies. "*And thy truth unto the clouds.*" Upon the cloud he sets the seal of his truth, the rainbow, which ratifies his covenant; in the cloud he hides his rain and snow, which prove his truth by bringing to us seedtime and harvest, cold and heat. Creation is great, but the Creator greater far. Heaven cannot contain him: above clouds and stars his goodness far exceeds.

11. "*Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens.*" A grand chorus. Take it up, ye angels and ye spirits made perfect, and join in it, ye sons of men below, as ye say, "*Let thy glory be above all the earth.*" The prophet in the previous verse spoke of mercy "unto the heavens," but here his song flies "above the heavens;" praise rises higher and higher, and knows no bound.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—This Psalm was composed, as the title notes, by David prayer-wise, when he hid himself from Saul in the cave, and is inscribed with a double title, *Al-taschith, Michtam of David. Al-taschith* refers to the scope, and *Michtam* to the dignity of the subject-matter. The former signifies *destroy not*, or, let there be no slaughter; and may either refer to Saul, concerning whom he gave charge to his servants not to destroy him; or rather it hath reference to God, to whom in this great exigence he poured out his soul in this pathetical ejaculation; *Al-taschith*, destroy not. The latter title, *Michtam*, signifies a golden ornament, and so is suited to the choice and excellent matter of the Psalm, which much more deserves such a title than Pythagoras' golden verses did.—*John Flavel* (1627—1691), *in* "*Divine Conduct, or the Mystery of Providence.*"

Title.—A Psalm composed *when David fled from Saul in the cave*, which is referred to in Ps. cxlii., and which, because it is without any other distinction called "the cave," is probably that celebrated cave where David with his six hundred followers lay concealed when Saul entered and David cut off the skirt of his robe. The king, accompanied by three thousand followers, chased him to the loftiest alpine heights—"to the sheep-cotes," where the cattle were driven in the hottest summer months only—to hunt him in every hiding-place. There was a cave, in the darkened cool of which David and his men were hid. Such caves in Palestine and the East are frequently enlarged by human hands, and so capacious that they accommodate thousands of people. This song of complaint was written during the hours of suspense which David spent there, to wait until the calamity was overpast (ver. 2); in which he only gradually gains a stout heart (ver. 8). His life was really suspended by a hair, if Saul or any of his attendants had espied him!—*Augustus F. Tholuck*, 1856.

Title.—"*The cave.*" There appear good grounds for the local tradition which fixes the cave on the borders of the Dead Sea, although there is no certainty with regard to the particular cave pointed out. The cave so designated is at a point to which David was far more likely to summon his parents, whom he intended to take from Bethlehem into Moab, than to any place in the western plains. . . . . It is an immense natural cavern, the mouth of which can be approached only on foot along the side of the cliff. Irby and Mangles, who visited it without being aware that it was the reputed Cave of Adullam, state that it "runs in by a long, winding, narrow passage, with small chambers or cavities on either side. We soon came to a large chamber with natural arches of great height; from this last there were numerous passages, leading in all directions, occasionally joined by others at right angles, and forming a perfect labyrinth, which our guides assured us had never been perfectly explored—the people being afraid of losing themselves. The passages are generally four feet high by three feet wide, and were all on a level with each other." . . . . It seems probable that David as a native of Bethlehem, must have been well acquainted with this remarkable spot, and had probably often availed himself of its shelter, when out with his father's flocks. It would, therefore, naturally occur to him as a place of refuge when he fled from Gath.—*John Kitto* (1804—1854), *in* "*A Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature.*"

Whole Psalm.—Mystically this hymn may be construed of Christ, who was in the days of his flesh assaulted by the tyranny both of spiritual and temporal enemies. His temporal enemies, Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, furiously raged and took counsel together against him. The chief priests and princes were, saith Hierome, like *lions*, and the people like the *whelps of lions*, all of them in a readiness to devour his soul. The

rulers *laid a net for his feet* in their captious interrogatories, asking (Matt. xxii. 17), "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?" and (John viii. 5) whether the woman taken in the very act of adultery should be stoned to death or no. The people were "*set on fire*," when as they raged against him, and *their teeth and tongues were spears and swords* in crying, "Crucify him crucify him." His spiritual enemies also sought *to swallow him up;* his *soul* was *among lions* all the days of his life, at the hour of his death especially. The devil in tempting and troubling him, had *laid a snare for his feet;* and death, in *digging a pit* for him, had thought *to devour* him. As David was in the *cave*, so Christ the Son of David was in the *grave.*—*John Boys*, 1571—1625.

Verse 1.—"*Be merciful unto me, O God*," etc. This excellent Psalm was composed by David when there was enough to discompose the best man in the world. The repetition notes both the extremity of the danger, and the ardency of the supplicant. *Mercy! Mercy! Nothing but mercy*, and that exerting itself in an extraordinary way, can now save him from ruin. The arguments he pleads for obtaining mercy in this distress are very considerable. 1. He pleads his reliance upon God as an argument to move mercy. "*My soul trusteth in thee*," etc. This his trust and dependence upon God, though it be not argumentative in respect of the dignity of the *act;* yet it is so in respect both of the nature of the *object*, a compassionate God, who will not expose any that take shelter under his wings, and in respect of the *promise*, whereby protection is assured to them that fly to him for sanctuary. Isa. xxvi. 3. 2. He pleads former experiences of his help in past distresses, as an argument encouraging hope under the present strait (ver. 2).—*John Flavel.*

Verse 1.—"*Be merciful unto me.*" According to the weight of the burden that grieveth us, is the cry that comes from us. How do poor condemned prisoners cry to their judges, "Have pity upon us, have pity upon us!" David, in the day of his calamities doubles his prayer for mercy: "*Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee*," etc.. "*Until these calamities be overpast.*" It was not a single calamity, but a multitude of calamities which compassed David, and therefore he compasseth the Lord about with petitions. His spirit being up in prayer, like a bell that rings out, he strikes on both sides, "*Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me.*"—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 1.—"*Be merciful unto me.*" The first clause contains the prayer itself in a very forcible word חָנֵּנִי, properly, "Show thy most tender affection to me," such as animals, with a humming sound, show to their young.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 1.—"*For my soul trusteth in thee.*" The best reason with God, who "taketh pleasure in those that hope in his mercy." Ps. cxlvii. 11.—*Poole's Synopsis.*

Verse 1.—"*Soul.*" His *soul* trusted in God; and this is a form of expression the force of which is not to be overlooked; for it implies that the trust which he exercised proceeded from his very innermost affections—that it was of no volatile character, but deeply and strongly rooted. He declares the same truth in figurative terms, when he adds his persuasion that God would cover him with the shadow of his wings.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 1.—"*In the shadow of thy wings I will trust*;" properly, I will seek for protection. The very delightful figure here employed, is taken from the chicken lying safely hid under the mother's wings: at the same time it seems to have reference to the wings of the cherubim, by which the mercy-seat was covered.—*Simon de Muis*, 1587—1644.

Verse 1.—"*The shadow of thy wings.*" Compare Psalm xvii. 8; lxi. 4; and Matthew xxiii. 37; and the Apocalyptic imagery, describing the church fleeing from the dragon in the wilderness; and "to her are given the two wings of the great eagle," and she is delivered from the dragon, who desires to *swallow her up.* See Rev. xii. 6, 15, 16.—*Christopher Wordsworth*, 1868.

Verse 1.—"*Until these calamities be overpast.*" He compareth his affliction and calamity to a storm that cometh and goeth: as it is not always fair weather with us in this life, so not always foul. Athanasius said of Julian furiously raging against the Lord's Anointed, "*Nubecula est, cito transibit,*" he is a little cloud; he will soon pass away. Man is born to labour and dolor, to travail and trouble; to labour in his actions, to dolor in his passions; and so, "Great are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of all." If we put our trust in him and cast all our care upon him, he will in his good time bring it to pass, that all our afflictions shall overpass. He will either take them from us or us from them, and then we shall assuredly know that the troubles of this life present are not worthy of the glory which in the life to come shall be showed unto us. For as the globe of the earth, which improperly for his show of bigness we term the world, and is, after the mathematician's account, many thousand miles in compass; yet, being compared unto the greatness of the starry sky's circumference, is but a centre or little prick: so the travail and affliction in this life temporal, in respect of the joys eternal in the world to come, bear not any proportion, but are to be reputed in comparison a very nothing, as a dark cloud that cometh and goeth in a moment.—*John Boys.*

Verses 1, 2, 3.—"*In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast,*" etc. As if he had said, Lord, I am already in the cave and in the holds, and in the shadow of it, but yet for all that I think not myself safe indeed, till I have made my refuge in the shadow of thy wings: that is therefore the course I resolve and build upon. It was wisely done of him: and mark what course he takes to do it, verse 2, "I will cry unto God most high," I will by prayer put myself under the shadow of God's wings; and mark what success should follow, verse 3, "He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth." When we send prayers up to heaven, God will send help down from heaven. But yet David *prays* to God, as well as *trusts* in God. And unless we pray as well as trust, our trust will fail us, for we must trust to God for that we pray for.—*Jeremiah Dyke*, 1620.

Verse 2.—"*Unto God that performeth all things for me.*" God's favours already received are a pledge that he will complete his work of love "*upon* (עָלַי) *me.*" The beginning is the earnest of the completion. His *word* is a guarantee for the *performance* of "all things" that I need. (Compare verse 3; Psalm lvi. 4; 1 Samuel ii. 9; iii. 12; xxiii. 17; xxiv. 21; Psalm cxxviii. 8; Job x. 3, 8; xiv. 15; Philippians i. 6: Isaiah xxvi. 12), *A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 2.—"*God that performeth all things for me.*" Heb. *that performeth* (or *perfecteth*, or *finisheth*, as this word is rendered, Psalm cxxxviii. 8; *i. e.*, will certainly perform or finish), *for*, or *towards*, or *concerning me.* He doth not express what he performeth, or perfecteth, or fulfilleth, but leaveth it to be understood, as being easy to be understood. "*He performeth*" or *perfecteth*, to wit, all that he hath promised; engageth himself to perform what he hath begun to do, or what is yet to be performed; it being usual in the Hebrew language to understand a verbal noun after the verb. He implies that God is not like men, who make large promises, but either through inability, or carelessness, or unfaithfulness, do not perform them, but will certainly be as good as his word.—*Matthew Pool*, 1624—1679.

Verse 2 (*last clause*).—The word which we translate "*performeth*" comes from a root that signifies both to *perfect* and to *desist* or *cease.* For when a business is performed and perfected, the agent then ceases and desists from working: he puts to the last hand when he finishes the work. To such a happy issue the Lord hath brought all his doubtful and difficult matters before; and this gives him encouragement that he will still be gracious, and perfect that which concerneth him now, as he speaks, Psalm cxxxviii. 8, "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." The Septuagint renders it by τὸν ἐνεργετη σοντά με,

who *profiteth* or *benefiteth* me. And it is a certain truth, that all the results and issues of providence are profitable and beneficial to the saints. But the supplement in our translation well conveys the importance of the place: "who performeth *all things;*" and it involves the most strict and proper notion of providence, which is nothing else but the performance of God's gracious purposes and promises to his people. And therefore Vatablus and Muis supply and fill up the room which the conciseness of the original leaves, with *quæ promisit:* "I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth *the things which he hath promised.*" Payment is the performance of promises. Grace makes the promise, and providence the payment. Piscator fills it with *benignitatem et misericordiam suam;* "unto God that performeth *his kindness and mercy.*" But still it supposes the mercy performed to be contained in the promise, and much more so in the providential performance of it to us.—*John Flavel.*

Verse 2 (*last clause*).—David even then when he fled from Saul in the cave he looks upon God as having *performed all things for him.* The word is, he hath *perfected all things;* and it is observable that David uses the same expression of praising God here when he was in the cave, hiding himself to save his life, as he did when he triumphed over his enemies—Ps. vi. and Ps. cviii.—*Jeremiah Burroughs,* 1599—1646.

Verse 2 (*last clause*).—The Targum curiously paraphrases this clause: "Who ordered the spider that wrought the web, on my account, at the mouth of the cave;" applying a later historical fact, which, however, may have had its prototype in David's history. *Andrew A. Bonar, in "Christ and his Church in the Book of Psalms,"* 1859.

Verse 3.—"*Him that would swallow me up.*" If I were to take you to my house, and say that I had an exquisitely fat man, and wished you to join me in eating him, your indignation could be restrained by nothing. You would pronounce me to be crazy. There is not in New York a man so mean that he would not put down a man who should propose to have a banquet off from a fellow man, cutting steaks out of him, and eating them. And that is nothing but feasting on the human body, while they all will sit down, and take a man's soul, and look for the tender loins, and invite their neighbours in to partake of the little titbits. They will take a man's honour and name, and broil them over the coals of their indignation, and fill the whole room with the aroma thereof, and give their neighbour a piece, and watch him, and wink as he tastes it. You all eat men up. . . . You eat the souls, the finest elements of men. You are more than glad if you can whisper a word that is derogatory to a neighbour, or his wife, or his daughter. . . . The morsel is too exquisite to be lost. Here is the soul of a person, here is a person's hope for this world and the world to come, and you have it on your fork, and you cannot refrain from tasting it, and give it to some one else to taste. You are cannibals, eating men's honour and name and rejoicing in it—and that, too, when you do not always know that the things charged against them are true; when in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the probabilities are that they are not true.—*Henry Ward Beecher,* 1870.

Verse 3.—"*God shall send forth his mercy and his truth,*" viz., to save me. That is to say, God, to manifest his mercy, and vindicate the truth of his promises, will save me. The reader will observe, that mercy and truth are here poetically represented as ministers of God, standing in his presence, ready to execute his pleasure, and employed by him in the salvation of his people.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 3.—"*His mercy and his truth.*" He need not send down angels, he need send but "*mercy and truth*" down, which elsewhere it is said he prepares in the heavens. Ps. lxi. 7. He prepares commissions for them, and sends them down with them for execution.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 4.—"*My soul is among lions.*" This may also be construed of the

church, and that both in respect of her spiritual enemies and temporal. As for her ghostly foes, the devil is *a roaring lion* (1 Pet. v. 8), and our sins are the *whelps of lions*, ready to devour us. And concerning outward enemies, the church in this world is like Daniel in the lion's den, or as "the sucking child playing upon the hole of the asp." Isa. xi. 8. She hath here no visible power or outward help to fly to for succour, all her trust is in the Lord, and "under the shadow of his wings is her refuge, till this evil is overpast." . . . . And surely, beloved, if the church had not any other enemies, but only these monstrous Antichrists of Rome, yet she might truly complain with our prophet here, "*My soul is among lions.*" Eleven popes had that name, whereof all, excepting two or three, were roaring lions in their Bulls, and ravening lions in seeking after their prey. *Leo* the tenth so pilled* and polled† the goodly nations of Germany with his impardonable pardons and merciless indulgences, as that his insupportable cruelty gave the first occasion of the Reformation of religion in that country.—*John Boys.*

Verse 4 (*first clause*).—"Mudge translates literally, 'I lie with my soul amidst lionesses.'" This agrees with the opinion of Bochart, who thinks that the animals here intended are lionesses, properly, when giving suck to their young, a time when they are peculiarly fierce and dangerous, "nor need we wonder," he observes, "that the lioness is reckoned among the fiercest lions; for the lioness equals, or even exceeds, the lion in strength and fierceness;" and this he proves from the testimonies of ancient writers.—*James Anderson's Note to Calvin in loc.*, 1846.

Verse 4.—"*And I lie even among them that are set on fire.*" The whole pith lies in the word אֶשְׁכְּבָה, *I will recline*, which denotes a tranquil and secure condition of body and mind, like a man *reclining* and sleeping, as Ps. iii. 5: "*I laid me down and slept, I awaked;*" and lived composedly; Ps. iv. 9; "*I will both lay me down in peace,*" etc.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 4.—The horrors of a lion's den, the burning of a fiery furnace, and the cruel onset of war, are the striking images by which David here describes the peril and wretchedness of his present condition.—*John Morison.*

Verse 6.—"*Net.*" Not having fire-arms, the ancients were much more skilful than the moderns in the use of snares, nets, and pits for capturing wild animals. A large class of Biblical figures and allusions necessarily presupposes this state of things.—*W. M. Thomson.*

Verse 7.—"*My heart is fixed, O God,*" etc. The psalmist knowing that it is the order and work of God, first to prepare the heart for communion, and then to incline his own ear to hear his people, and to entertain communion with them in ordinances, he doth observe this order, and follow it with a practice suitable to it in his daily addresses to God, that is thus, wheresoever he doth find his heart put into a fitted and prepared frame for communion with God, he doth not let it die again, and go out of frame by a slothful neglect of such a disposition of heart. No, but he immediately sets himself to duty, to worship God, and to the acts of his worship, in his ordinances, as he expresseth himself in Ps. lvii. 7; viz., thus—נָכוֹן לִבִּי אֱלֹהִים נָכוֹן לִבִּי, *Nachon libbi Elohim, nachon libbi* (there is the first; he finds his heart fitted and prepared for communion with God): "My heart," saith he, "is fitted or prepared" (for the word נָכוֹן, *nachon* is the passive conjugation *niphal*, signifying, he is fitted or prepared, from the root, כּוּן, *chun*, he fitted or prepared, in the active; and so it is rather to be rendered prepared or fitted, then "fixed," thus: לִבִּי, *libbi*, my heart; נָכוֹן, *nachon*, is fitted or prepared), "O God, my heart is fitted or prepared" for communion with thee. Well, what follows? He presently sets himself upon that great duty and ordinance of communion with God, in the praising of his name and singing forth those praises, as in the words immediately following in

* Pill = peel, to pillage, plunder, strip. † Poll, used synonymously with peel.

the same verse, thus: "My heart is prepared, O God, my heart is prepared;" therefore, נָכוֹן, *ashidah va-azamerah*, "*I will sing and give praise.*"—*William Strong, in "Communion with God,"* 1656.

Verse 7.—"*My heart is fixed, O God,*" etc. Fitness for duty lies in the orderly temper of body and mind, making a man willing to undertake, and able to finish his work with comfortable satisfaction. If either the body or mind be distempered, a man is unfit for such an undertaking; both must be in a suitable frame, like a well-tuned instrument, else there will be no melody: hence when David prepared himself for praises and worship, he tells us *his heart was ready and fixed*, and then, his *tongue* was ready also (Psalm xlv. 1.), so was his hand with psaltery and harp; all these were awakened into a suitable posture. That a man is or hath been in a fit order for service may be concluded from (1.) His alacrity to undertake a duty. (2.) His activity in the prosecution. (3.) His satisfaction afterward. Right grounds and principles in these things being still pre-supposed.—*Richard Gilpin*, (1625—1699, 1700,) *in "Dæmonologia Sacra."*

Verse 7.—"*I will sing.*" It should alarm the wicked that they are contending with a people who sing and shout on the battle-field. Yea, they never sing louder than when most distressed and afflicted. Whether saints conquer or are conquered they still sing on. Blessed be God for that. Let sinners tremble at contending with men of a spirit so heavenly.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 7.—Sincerity makes the Christian sing, when he hath nothing to his supper. David was in none of the best case when in the cave, yet we never find him merrier: his heart makes sweeter music than ever his harp did.—*William Gurnall.*

Verses 7, 8.—That worship that is performed with a sleepy, drowsy body, is a weak worship, but the psalmist here makes the awaking of the body to be the fruit and effect of the preparation of the heart; "*Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.*" Why so? My heart is prepared. The heart prepared and thereby awaked, will awake the body. To worship God therefore without a prepared heart, is to worship him with a drowsy body, because with a drowsy heart, and therefore weakly.—*John Angier, in "An Help to better Hearts, for better Times,"* 1647.

Verse 8.—"*Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.*" We must prevent God by early praise as well as prayer; "The God of my mercy shall prevent me," sings David; and every child of David must prevent God again with his songs. Jehoshaphat delighted God with instruments of music before his deliverance. Faith must tune an *επινίκιον*, a psalm of victory, before the triumph. Praise is the ingenious mother of future mercies; as the Virgin Mary sang at Hebron before the birth of her son at Bethlehem. Oh, heavenly contention between mercy and duty!—*Samuel Lee*, 1625—1691.

Verse 8.—"*Awake up, my glory,*" etc. We must sing *with excited grace.* Not only with grace habitual, but with excited and actual: the musical instrument delights not but when it is played upon. In this duty we must follow Paul's advice to Timothy (2 Tim. i. 6), *ἀναζωπυρεῖν*, stir up the grace that is in us, and cry out as David, "*Awake love, awake delight.*" Ps. lvii. 8. The clock must be wound up before it can guide our time; the bird pleaseth not in her nest, but in her notes; the chimes only make music while they are going. Let us therefore beg the Spirit to blow upon our garden, that the spices thereof may flow out, when we set upon this joyous service. God loves active grace in duty, that the soul should be ready trimmed when it presents itself to Christ in any worship.—*John Wells, in "Morning Exercises,"* 1674.

Verse 8.—"*I will awake early.*" Literally, 'I will awake the dawn,' a bold figure of poetry, as if the writer had said,—The morning shall not awake me to praise; but in my songs I will anticipate the dawn.—*R. T. Society's Notes.*

Verse 8.—It will answer our purpose to take notice, first, of the *terms* David uses, and then, secondly, press the *exhortation*. Of the terms he uses: 1. My *glory*. That is my *soul* (say some) because the spirit of a man is the glory of a man, whereby he is dignified and raised so much above the *brutes*, as to be but a "little lower than the angels," nay, to be akin to God himself, "the Father of spirits." My *musical skill*, say others, the glory of the artist above the unskilful; and that wherein David had the glory of excelling, as Jubal had of the first invention. My *tongue*, say others; for this is also the glory of a man above dumb creatures, and the glory of a wise man above a fool. And as the tongue is the glory of a man, so the glory of the tongue is to glorify God. Praise is the glory of all other uses to which the tongue is employed; and the tongue is, in the body, that "temple of the Holy Ghost," what the silver trumpet was in the temple of Solomon; to sound the high praises of God, and express the raised affections of our souls.

2. "*Awake, psaltery and harp.*" The one for a psalm, the other for a spiritual song or hymn; that is to say, all my musical instruments and skill I will employ in, and consecrate to the glory of him who "puts new songs into my mouth." He first teaches my fingers to fight, and then to play the *epinikion*, or song of triumph. Sound, then, my psaltery and harp, emulous of those that are around the throne above; your melody can soften my cares, lay my fears, and turn my *cave* into a *choir*. As to these instruments in the worship of God, they were doubtless allowed to David, and to the church in his time. They were agreeable to the state of that church and people, who were led very much by their senses; and whose infant and less discerning condition made it needful for the natural man to have something to fasten upon and be entertained with in the worship of God, and to sweeten and take off from the labour and burden of that service. But as the gospel worship and appointments are a more spiritual, pleasant, and reasonable service, and need them less, so in the gospel institution we find no footsteps of them; and we know who first brought them into the church, as well as who first brought them into the world. It is not my business here to dispute this matter; and he must at any time do it but indifferently, whose inclination is against him all the while, and whose genius tempts him to wish himself solidly confuted in all he can advance. But since I find these instruments in my text, and since the sound of such texts as these is made use of to turn the public worship so frequently into concerts of music, I shall leave them with this remark: that to let them alone, especially in public worship, though one thought them tolerable, has a much better grace with it than to declare them "sorely displeasing to God, and that they filthily defile his holy house and place of prayer."

3. "*I myself will awake early.*" And without this, all the rest had been an empty sound; there would have been no melody to the Lord, whatsoever good music he might have made to himself. He would not put God off with a sacrifice of mere air. He summons the attendance of all his powers. Himself is the offering; and his music plays to the sacrifice, as it goes up in holy affections and spiritual joys; and unless these accompany the song, the mere breath of an organ, or the trembling of the strings of an harp is as good devotion and less offensive to God. Consider the *nature and excellency of the duty*. Singing psalms is a compound of several other duties. It contains prayer to a very great advantage: the stretch of the voice does humour and lead on the earnest reaching of the mind after the desired blessing. It is the very element and breath of praise; and the apostle tells us that "teaching and admonishing one another" is performed in singing "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." For when we sing of *judgment*, it is awakening to sinners; and when we sing of *mercy*, it is comforting to all. Meditation cannot have a better help. The solemn movement of the time gives room for the mind to compass the full sense of the matter, and to impress it deep; and while the tongue is making the *pause*, the heart may make the *elevation*. In short, it gives an accent to all duty; it is the music of all other ordinances; it is

adapted and suited to all circumstances; as appears from the psalms composed upon all occasions and subjects, doctrinal, prophetical, hortatory, and historical; of praise and prayer, of grief and joy, in the penitential and complaining, in the triumphal and rejoicing; as if singing of psalms could stand for everything, and, like the manna in the wilderness, give a taste of all the other food we enjoy in the house of God.—*Benjamin Grosvenor. D.D.* (1675—1758), *in* "*An Exhortation to the Duty of Singing.*" *Eastcheap Lectures*, 1810.

Verse 8.—The *psaltery* was a stringed instrument, usually with twelve strings, and played with the fingers. The *harp* or lyre was a stringed instrument, usually consisting of ten strings. Josephus says that it was struck or played with a key. It appears, however, that it was sometimes played with the fingers.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 9.—"*I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people.*" The Spirit of God who indited this scripture, made his penman know that the Gentiles should have the use of his Psalms.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 9.—"*The people*"—"*the nations.*" The Hebrew church was neither called nor qualified to be a missionary society, but it never ceased to desire and hope for the conversion of the nations. This is seen in those passages in which the psalmists betray a consciousness that they shall one day have all the world for auditors. How boldly does David exclaim, "*I will sing unto thee among the nations.*" In the same spirit, a later psalmist summons the church to lift up her voice, so that all the nations may hear her recital of the Lord's mighty acts: "O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people." Ps. cv. 1. The full import of this class of texts is often hidden from the English reader by the circumstance that our translators have hardly ever used the word *people* in its plural form. Twice in the Revelation they venture to write *peoples;* everywhere else the singular form has to do duty for both numbers; so that in not a few passages the sense is greatly obscured to those who have no access either to the original or to other versions. In the Psalms, in particular, the mention of the Gentiles is more frequent than the English reader is made aware of. It is to be observed, moreover, that in addition to this strain of indirect prediction, the conversion of the world is articulately celebrated in many glorious Psalms. Indeed, so numerous are these, and so generally distributed over the centuries between David and Ezra, that it would seem that at no time during the long history of inspired Psalmody, did the Spirit cease to indite new songs in which the children of Zion might give utterance to their world-embracing hopes.—*William Binnie, D.D., in* "*The Psalms: their History, Teachings, and Use,*" 1870.

Verses 10, 11.—A hard and ungrateful heart beholds even in prosperity only isolated drops of divine grace; but a grateful one like David's, though chased by persecutors, and striking the harp in the gloom of a cave, looks upon the mercy and faithfulness of God as a mighty ocean, waving and heaving from the earth to the clouds, and from the clouds to the earth again.—*Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 11.—"*Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens,*" etc. Greater words of prayer than these never came from human lips. Heaven and earth have as they imply, a mutually interwoven history, and the blessed, glorious end of this is in the sunrise of the Divine glory over both.—*Franz Delitzsch*, 1869.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1 (*first clause*).—*Repetition in prayer.* I. Its dangers. May degenerate into "vain repetitions." Carried to excess painfully suggests the idea, God is unwilling. II. Its uses. Eases the soul like tears. Manifests intense emotion. Enables those of less mental activity to join in the general supplication.—*R. A. Griffin.*

Verse 1.—Here are—I. Calamities. 1. War. 2. Pestilence. 3. Privations. 4. Sin, greatest of all. 5. Death. 6. Curse of a broken law. II. Here is a refuge from these calamities. 1. In God. 2. Specially in the mercy of God. III. There is flying to that refuge. 1. By faith; "*My soul trusteth in thee;*" "*Under the shadow,*" etc. 2. By prayer; "*Be,*" etc. IV. Here is continuance both in faith and prayer; "*until,*" etc.—*G. R.*

Verses 1, 4, 6, 7.—Note the varying condition of the same heart, at the same time. "*My soul trusteth in thee.*" "*My soul is among lions.*" "*My soul is bowed down.*" "*My heart is fixed.*"

Verse 2.—Prayer to the performing God. He performs all his promises, all my salvation, all my preservation, all needed between here and heaven. Here he reveals his omnipotence, his grace, his faithfulness, his immutability; and we are bound to show our faith, patience, joy, and gratitude.

Verse 2.—Strange reasons. I. The psalmist, in the depths of distress, cries to God, because he is most high in glory. Surely this thought might well paralyse him with the fear of divine inaccessibility, but the soul quickened with suffering, sees through and beyond the metaphor, rejoices in the truth, "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly." II. He cries to God for help, because God *is* performing all things for him. Why urge him then? Prayer is the music to which "the mighty man of war" goes forth to battle.—*R. A. G.*

Verse 3.—The saint's comfort in adversity. I. All contingencies are provided for: "*He shall* (or will) *send.*" II. The highest resources are available: "*from heaven.*" III. The worst foes will be overcome in the end: "*him that would swallow me up.*" IV. By the holiest means: "*mercy and truth.*"—*R. A. G.*

Verse 3.—The celestial messengers. What they are. The certainty of their being sent. Their effectual operation. The grateful receiver.

Verse 3 (*last clause*).—The harmony of the divine attributes in salvation. Mercy founded on truth, truth vindicating mercy. Mercy without injustice, justice honoured in mercy.

Verse 4.—"*My soul is among lions.*" How came I there? If for God's sake, then I may remember—1. So was my Lord in the wilderness. 2. The lions are chained. 3. Their howling is all they can do. 4. I shall come out of their den alive, unhurt, honoured. 5. The Lion of Judah is with me. 6. I shall soon be among the angels.

Verse 5.—I. The end which God has in view, both in heaven and earth, in a sinful and in sinless worlds—his own glory. II. Our duty to acquiesce in that end: "*Be thou,*" etc.—not self, not men, not angels—"*Be thou exalted,*" etc. In this we should acquiesce—1. Actively, by seeking that end. 2. Passively, by submission to his will.—*G. R.*

Verse 6 (*first clause*).—I. Who are they? 1. Those who lead us into sin. 2. Who argue from worldly philosophy. 3. Who proclaim priestly and sacramental superstition. 4. Who decoy us from the church of God. 5. Who teach Antinomian doctrine. II. How shall we escape them? 1. Keep out of their way. 2. Keep to God's way. 3. Trust daily in the Lord.

Verse 6.—"*My soul is bowed down.*" I. *The prostration.* 1. Caused by enemies, weakness, fear, pain. 2. Deep, agonising, self-revealing. 3. Common to the Head and the members. II. *The consolation.* 1. Bowed down, but not condemned. 2. Hoping in the promise. 3. Trusting in God. 4. Expecting a blessing from the trial.

Verse 7 (*first clause*).—It is implied that the "*heart*" is the main thing required in all acts of devotion; nothing is done to purpose in religion further

than it is done with the heart. The heart must be "*fixed*;" fixed *for* the duty, fitted and put in frame for it; fixed *in* the duty by a close application; *attending on the Lord* without distraction.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 7.—I. What is fixed? the heart, not the mind merely, but the will, the conscience, the affections, which draw the mind after them: "*My heart is fixed*"—found an anchorage, a resting-place, not therefore at the mercy of every gale, etc. II. The objects upon which it is fixed. 1. Upon God. 2. Upon his word. 3. Upon his salvation. 4. Upon heaven. III. The fixedness of the heart upon these objects, denotes—1. Singleness of aim. 2. Uniformity of action. 3. Perseverance to the end.—*G. R.*

Verses 7, 8, 9.—1. He that will be thankful must treasure up in his heart and memory the courtesy that is done him; so had David done, and therefore he mentions *his heart;* and to make it more emphatical, he names it again, "*My heart.*" 2. After he remembers it, he must be affected with it, and resolve upon it; so doth David: "*My heart is ready,*" or else, "*My heart is fixed;*" confirmed I am in it to be thankful, and I cannot be altered. 3. 'Tis not enough that a man carry about with him a thankful heart; he must *annunciare*, tell it abroad, and make it known publicly what God hath done for him; yea, and do it joyfully too: "*I will,*" saith David, "*sing and give praise.*" 4. He must use all means he can to make it known—"*tongue,*" "*psaltery,*" and "*harp,*" all are little enough. Whence, by an apostrophe, David turns to these. "*Awake, my glory:*" i.e., *Tongue, awake; lute and harp, awake; I myself will awake.* 5. He must not do it in a sleepy manner, but with intention and earnestness of spirit: "*Awake, awake, I will awake.*" 6. He must take the first opportunity to do it, and not hang off and delay it: "I will awake *early.*" 7. He must do it in such a place, and such an assembly as may most redound to God's honour: "I will praise thee, O Lord, *among the people:* I will sing unto thee *among the nations.*"—*William Nicholson.*

Verse 8.—"*I myself will wake early.*" I will sleep lightly, for I am in an enemy's country; I will ask God to arouse me; I will set the alarum of watchfulness; I will hear the cock of providential warning; the light of the Sun shall arouse me; the activities of the church, the trumpet of my foes, and the bell of duty shall combine to awaken me.

Verse 9.—Who? "I." What? "Will praise." Whom? "Thee, O Lord." Where? "Among the people." Why?

Verse 9.—Public profession. I. A necessity. II. A privilege. III. A duty.—*R. A. G.*

Verse 10.—The mercy of God reaches to the heavens—I. As a throne. God is exalted in our eyes by his mercy. II. As a ladder. By mercy we ascend from earth to heaven. III. As a rainbow. Present and past mercies argue exemption for the saints from the wrath of heaven. IV. As a mountain. Its base is on the earth though its summit is lost in clouds. The influence of the cross towers to the heaven of heavens. Who can tell the glory of the summit of this mountain, whose *base* is refulgent with glory!—*R. A. G.*

Verse 10.—The amazing greatness of mercy. It is not said merely that it is high as heaven, but great unto the heavens. It is *high* as the heavens, overtopping the greatest sin, and highest thought of man. II. It is *wide* as the far-reaching sky, compassing men of all ages, countries, classes, etc. III. It is *deep.* Everything of God is proportionate; this, therefore, is deep in abiding foundation, and infinite wisdom.

WORKS UPON THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PSALM.

"*The Works of* JOHN BOYS, D.D., *Deane of Canterburie,*" 1629, folio, pp. 834—40, contains an Exposition of Psalm lvii.

In CHANDLER'S "*Life of David,*" Vol. I., pp. 176—9, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.

PSALM LVIII.

To the Chief Musician.—*Although David had his own case in his mind's eye, yet he wrote not as a private person, but as an inspired prophet, and therefore his song is presented, for public and perpetual use, to the appointed guardian of the Temple psalmody.* Al-taschith. *The wicked are here judged and condemned, but over the godly the sacred* "Destroy not" *is solemnly pronounced.* Michtam of David. *This is the fourth of the Psalms of the Golden Secret, and the second of the "Destroy nots." These names if they serve for nothing else may be useful to aid the memory. Men give names to their horses, jewels, and other valuables, and these names are meant not so much to describe as to distinguish them, and in some cases to set forth the owner's high esteem of his treasure; after the same fashion the Oriental poet gave a title to the song he loved, and so aided his memory, and expressed his estimation of the strain. We are not always to look for a meaning in these superscriptions, but to treat them as we would the titles of poems, or the names of tunes.*

DIVISION.—*The ungodly enemy is accused, verses* 1—5; *judgment is sought from the judge, verses* 6—8; *and seen in prophetic vision as already executed, verses* 9—11.

EXPOSITION.

DO ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?

2 Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.

3 The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

4 Their poison *is* like the poison of a serpent: *they are* like the deaf adder *that* stoppeth her ear;

5 Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.

1. "*Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation?*" The enemies of David were a numerous and united band, and because they so unanimously condemned the persecuted one, they were apt to take it for granted that their verdict was a right one. "What everybody says must be true," is a lying proverb based upon the presumption which comes of large combinations. Have we not all agreed to hound the man to the death, and who dare hint that so many great ones can be mistaken? Yet the persecuted one lays the axe at the root by requiring his judges to answer the question whether or not they were acting according to justice. It were well if men would sometimes pause, and candidly consider this. Some of those who surrounded Saul were rather passive than active persecutors; they held their tongues when the object of royal hate was slandered; in the original, this first sentence appears to be addressed to them, and they are asked to justify their silence. Silence gives consent. He who refrains from defending the right is himself an accomplice in the wrong. "*Do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?*" Ye too are only men though dressed in a little brief authority. Your office for men, and your relation to men both bind you to rectitude; but have ye remembered this? Have ye not put aside all truth when ye have condemned the godly, and united in seeking the overthrow of the innocent? Yet in doing this be not too sure of success, for ye are only the "sons of men," and there is a God who can and will reverse your verdicts.

2. "*Yea, in heart ye work wickedness.*" Down deep in your very souls ye hold a rehearsal of the injustice ye intend to practise, and when your opportunity arrives, ye wreak vengeance with a gusto; your hearts are in your wicked work, and your hands are therefore ready enough. Those very men who sat as judges, and pretended to so much indignation at the faults imputed to their victim, were in their hearts perpetrating all manner of evil. "*Ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.*" They were deliberate sinners, cold, calculating villains. As righteous judges ponder the law, balance the evidence, and weigh the case, so the malicious dispense injustice with malice aforethought in cold blood. Note in this verse that the men described sinned with heart and hand; privately in their heart, publicly in the earth; they worked and they weighed—they were active, and yet deliberate. See what a generation saints have to deal with! Such were the foes of our Lord, a generation of vipers, an evil and adulterous generation; they sought to kill him because he was righteousness itself, yet they masked their hatred to his goodness by charging him with sin.

3 "*The wicked are estranged from the womb.*" It is small wonder that some men persecute the righteous seed of the woman, since all of them are of the serpent's brood, and enmity is set between them. No sooner born than alienated from God—what a condition to be found in! Do we so early leave the right track? Do we at the same moment begin to be men and commence to be sinners? "*They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.*" Every observer may see how very soon infants act lies. Before they can speak they practise little deceptive arts. This is especially the case in those who grow up to be adepts in slander, they begin their evil trade early, and there is no marvel that they become adepts in it. He who starts early in the morning will go far before night. To be untruthful is one of the surest proofs of a fallen state, and since falsehood is universal, so also is human depravity.

4. "*Their poison is like the poison of a serpent.*" Is man also a poisonous reptile? Yes, and his venom is even as that of a serpent. The viper has but death for the body in his fangs; but unregenerate man carries poison under his tongue, destructive to the nobler nature. "*They are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear.*" While speaking of serpents the psalmist remembers that many of them have been conquered by the charmer's art, but men such as he had to deal with no art could tame or restrain; therefore, he likens them to a serpent less susceptible than others to the charmer's music, and says that they refused to hear reason, even as the adder shuts her ear to those incantations which fascinate other reptiles. Man, in his natural corruption, appears to have all the ill points of a serpent without its excellences. O sin, what hast thou done!

5. "*Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.*" Ungodly men are not to be won to right by arguments the most logical, or appeals the most pathetic. Try all your arts, ye preachers of the word! Lay yourselves out to meet the prejudices and tastes of sinners, and ye shall yet have to cry, "Who hath believed our report?" It is not in your music, but in the sinner's ear that the cause of failure lies, and it is only the power of God that can remove it.

> "You can call spirits from the vasty deep,
> But will they come when you do call for them?"

No, we call and call, and call in vain, till the arm of the Lord is revealed. This is at once the sinner's guilt and danger. He ought to hear but will not, and because he will not hear, he cannot escape the damnation of hell.

6 Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD.

7 Let them melt away as waters *which* run continually: *when* he bendeth *his bow to shoot* his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces.

8 As a snail *which* melteth, let *every one of them* pass away: *like* the untimely birth of a woman, *that* they may not see the sun.

6. "*Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth.*" If they have no capacity for good, at least deprive them of their ability for evil. Treat them as the snake-charmers do their serpents, extract their fangs, break their teeth. The Lord can do this, and he will. He will not suffer the malice of the wicked to triumph, he will deal them such a blow as shall disable them from mischief. "*Break out the great teeth of the young lions, O Lord.*" As if one brute creature had not enough of evil in it to complete the emblem of ungodly nature, another specimen of *feræ naturæ* is fetched in. For fierce cruelty the wicked are likened to young lions, monsters in the prime of their vigour, and the fury of their lustiness; and it is asked that their grinders may be smashed in, broken off, or dashed out, that the creatures may henceforth be harmless. One can well understand how the banished son of Jesse, while poisoned by the venomous slander of his foes, and worried by their cruel power, should appeal to heaven for a speedy and complete riddance from his enemies.

7. "*Let them melt away as waters which run continually.*" Like mountain torrents dried up by the summer heats let them disappear; or like running streams whose waters are swiftly gone, so let them pass away; or like water spilt which none can find again, so let them vanish out of existence. Begone, ye foul streams, the sooner ye are forgotten the better for the universe. "*When he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces.*" When the Lord goes forth to war, let his judgments so tell upon these persecutors that they may be utterly cut in pieces as a mark shattered by many shafts. Or perhaps the meaning is, when the ungodly man marches to the conflict, let his arrows and his bow drop into fragments, the string cut, the bow snapped, the arrows headless, the points blunted; so that the boastful warrior may not have wherewithal to hurt the object of his enmity. In either sense the prayer of the Psalm has often become fact, and will be again fulfilled as often as need arises.

8. "*As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away.*" As the snail makes its own way by its slime, and so dissolves as it goes, or as its shell is often found empty, as though the inhabitant had melted away, so shall the malicious eat out their own strength while they proceed upon their malevolent designs, and shall themselves disappear. To destroy himself by envy and chagrin is the portion of the ill-disposed. "*Like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun.*" Solemn is this curse, but how surely does it fall on many graceless wretches! They are as if they had never been. Their character is shapeless, hideous, revolting. They are fitter to be hidden away in an unknown grave than to be reckoned among men. Their life comes never to ripeness, their aims are abortive, their only achievement is to have brought misery to others, and horror to themselves. Such men as Herod, Judas, Alva, Bonner, had it not been better for them if they had never been born? Better for the mothers who bore them? Better for the lands they cursed? Better for the earth in which their putrid carcasses are hidden from the sun? Every unregenerate man is an abortion. He misses the true form of God-made manhood; he corrupts in the darkness of sin; he never sees or shall see the light of God in purity, in heaven.

9 Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in *his* wrath.

10 The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.

11 So that a man shall say, Verily *there is* a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

9. "*Before your pots can feel the thorns.*" So sudden is the overthrow of the wicked, so great a failure is their life, that they never see joy. Their pot is put upon the hook to prepare a feast of joy, and the fuel is placed beneath, but before the thorns are lit, before any heat can be brought to bear upon the pot, yea, even as soon as the fuel has touched the cooking vessel, a storm comes and sweeps all away; the pot is overturned, the fuel is scattered far and wide. Perhaps the figure may suppose the thorns, which are the fuel, to be kindled, and then the flame is so rapid that before any heat can be produced the fire is out, the meat remains raw, the man is disappointed, his work is altogether a failure. "*He shall take them away as with a whirlwind.*" Cook, fire, pot, meat and all, disappear at once, whirled away to destruction. "*Both living, and in his wrath.*" In the very midst of the man's life, and in the fury of his rage against the righteous, the persecutor is overwhelmed with a tornado, his designs are baffled, his contrivances defeated, and himself destroyed. The passage is difficult, but this is probably its meaning, and a very terrible one it is. The malicious wretch puts on his great seething pot, he gathers his fuel, he means to play the cannibal with the godly; but he reckons without his host, or rather without the Lord of hosts, and the unexpected tempest removes all trace of him, and his fire, and his feast, and that in a moment.

10. "*The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance.*" He will have no hand in meting it out, neither will he rejoice in the spirit of revenge, but his righteous soul shall acquiesce in the judgments of God, and he shall rejoice to see justice triumphant. There is nothing in Scripture of that sympathy with God's enemies which modern traitors are so fond of parading as the finest species of benevolence. We shall at the last say, "Amen," to the condemnation of the wicked, and feel no disposition to question the ways of God with the impenitent. Remember how John, the loving disciple, puts it. "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever." "*He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.*" He shall triumph over them, they shall be so utterly vanquished that their overthrow shall be final and fatal, and his deliverance complete and crowning. The damnation of sinners shall not mar the happiness of saints.

11. "*So that a man shall say.*" Every man however ignorant shall be compelled to say, "*Verily,*" in very deed, assuredly, "*there is a reward for the righteous.*" If nothing else be true this is The godly are not after all forsaken and given over to their enemies; the wicked are not to have the best of it, truth and goodness are recompensed in the long run. "*Verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.*" All men shall be forced by the sight of the final judgment to see that there is a God, and that he is the righteous ruler of the universe. Two things will come out clearly after all—there is a God and there is a reward for the righteous. Time will remove doubts, solve difficulties, and reveal secrets; meanwhile faith's foreseeing eye discerns the truth even now and is glad thereat.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—The proper meaning of the root of *Michtam* is *to engrave*, or *to stamp a metal.* It therefore, in strictness, means, *an engraving* or *sculpture.* Hence in the Septuagint, it is translated στηλογραφία, an inscription on a column. I would venture to offer a conjecture in perfect harmony with this view. It appears by the titles of four out of these six Psalms, that they were composed by David while flying and hiding from the persecutions of Saul. What, then, should hinder us from imagining that they were inscribed on the rocks and on the sides of the caves which so often formed his place of refuge? This view would accord with the strict etymological meaning of the word, and explain the rendering of the Septuagint.—*John Jebb, in "A Literal Translation of the Book of Psalms,"* 1846.

[See also Explanatory Notes on Psalms vi. and lvi. "Treasury of David," Vol. I., pp. 222—23; Vol. III., p. 40.]

Whole Psalm.—Kimchi says this Psalm was written on account of Abner, and the rest of Saul's princes, who judged David as a rebel against the government, and said it was for Saul to pursue after him to slay him; for if they had restrained him, Saul would not have pursued after him; and indeed they seem to be wicked judges who are addressed in this Psalm; *do not destroy.* Arama says, it declares the wickedness of Saul's judges.—*John Gill.*

Verse 1.—"*Are ye dumb,* (when) *ye* (should) *speak righteousness,* (and) *judge equitably, sons of man?*" The first words are exceedingly obscure. One of them (אִלֻּם), not expressed in the English, and the ancient versions, means *dumbness,* as in Psalm lxi. 1, and seems to be here used as a strong expression for *entirely speechless.* In what respect they were thus dumb, is indicated by the verb which follows, but the connection can be made clear in English only by a circumlocution. The interrogation, *are ye indeed,* expresses wonder, as at something scarcely credible. Can it be so? Is it possible? are you really silent, you, whose very office is to speak for God, and against the sins of men?—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 1.—"*O congregation,*" *O band,* or *company.* The Hebrew *œlem,* which hath the signification of *binding as a sheaf or bundle,* seemeth here to be a company that are combined or confederate.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 2.—"*In heart ye work wickedness,*" etc. The psalmist doth not say, they had wickedness in their heart, but they did work it there: the heart is a shop within, an under-ground shop; there they did closely contrive, forge, and hammer out their wicked purposes, and fit them into actions; yea, *they weighed the violence of their hands in the earth.* That's an allusion to merchants, who buy and sell by weight; they weigh their commodity to an ounce; they do not give it out in gross, but by exact weight. Thus saith the psalmist, *they weigh the violence of their hands;* they do not oppress grossly, but with a kind of exactness and skill, they sit down and consider what and how much violence they may use in such a case, or how much such a person may endure, or such a season may bear. They are wiser than to do all at once, or all to one, lest they spoil all. They "*weigh*" what they do, though what they do be so bad that it will hold no weight when God comes to weigh it. Nor do they arrive at this skill presently, but after they have, as it were, served an apprenticeship at it; and they bind themselves to the trade very early; for as it follows at the third verse of the Psalm, "*The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies,*" that is, they are estranged both by nature and by early practice; they lose no time, they go to it young, even "as soon as they are born," as soon as they are fit for any use, or to do any thing, they are using and setting themselves to do wickedly.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 2.—The word עַוְלָה *wickedness* properly signifies the *inclinations of scales*, when the scale weighs down to one side; then it is transferred to respect of persons, to injustice and iniquity, especially in public tribunals and decisions, as in Psalm lxxxii. 2, *How long will ye judge* (תִּשְׁפְּטוּ) by *an unjust inclination of the scales?*—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 2.—The principles of the wicked are even worse than their practices. premeditated violence is doubly guilty.—*George Rogers.*

Verse 3.—"*The wicked are estranged from the womb.*" etc. How early men do sin! How late do they repent! *As soon as they are born* "they go astray," but if left to themselves they will not return till they die; they will never return. Children can neither go nor speak as soon as born, but as soon as born they can "go astray" and "speak lies;" that is, their first speaking is lying, and their first going is straying; yea, when they cannot go naturally, they can go astray morally or metaphorically: the first step they are able to take is a step out of the way.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 3.—"*They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.*" Of all sins, no sin can call Satan father like to lying. All the corruption that is in us came from Satan, but yet this sin of forging and lying is from the devil more than any; tastes of the devil more than any. Hence every man is a liar (Romans iii. 4), and so every man is every sinner else; but in a special manner every man is a liar; for that the very first depravation of our nature came in by lying, and our nature doth taste much still of this old block to be given to lying, the devil also breathing into us a strong breath to stir us up to lying. Hence *no sooner do we speak but we lie.* As we are in body, subject to all diseases, but yet, some to one sickness rather than to another: so in the soul, all are apt enough to all sin, and some rather to one vice than to another; but all are much inclined to lying. A liar then is as like the devil as ever he can look: as unlike to God as ever he can be.—*Richard Capel*, 1586—1656, *in* "*Tentations, their Nature, Danger, Cure.*"

Verse 3.—The figure of the wicked going astray so soon as they are born, seems to be taken from the disposition and power of a young serpent soon after its birth. The youngest serpent can convey poison to anything which it bites; and the suffering in all cases is great, though the bite is seldom fatal. Place a stick near the reptile whose age does not amount to many days, and he will immediately snap at it. The offspring of the tiger and of the alligator are equally fierce in their earliest habits.—*Joseph Roberts, in* "*Oriental Illustrations of the Sacred Scriptures,*" 1844.

Verse 4.—"*Poison.*" There is such a thing as poison; but where to be found? *Ubicunque fuerit, in homine quis quæreret?* Wheresoever it is, in man who would look for it? God made man's body of the dust; he mingled no poison with it. He inspireth his soul from heaven; he breathes no poison with it. He feeds him with bread; he conveys no poison with it. *Unde venenum?* Whence is the poison? Matt. xiii. 27—"Didst not thou, O Lord, sow good seed in thy field?" *Unde zizaniæ*—"From whence then hath it tares?" Whence? *Hoc fecit inimicus*—"The enemy hath done this." We may perceive the devil in it. That great serpent, the red dragon, hath poured into wicked hearts this poison. His own poison, *malitiam*, wickedness. *Cum infundit peccatum, infundit venenum*—"When he pours in sin he pours in poison." Sin is poison. Original pravity is called corruption; actual poison. The violence and virulence of this venemous quality comes not at first. *Nemo fit repente pessimus*—No man becomes worst at the first dash. We are born corrupt, we have made ourselves poisonous. There be three degrees, as it were so many ages, in sin. *First*—secret sin; an ulcer lying in the bones, but skinned over with hypocrisy. *Secondly*—open sin, bursting forth into manifest villany. The former is corruption, the second is eruption. *Thirdly*—frequented and confirmed sin, and that is rank poison, envenoming soul and body.—*Thomas Adams*, 1614.

Verse 4.—"*Adder.*" Heb. פֶּתֶן *pethen*, the Egyptian cobra (*Naja hage*), one of the venemous *Colubrine* Snakes (*Colubridæ*). This is one of the so called hooded snakes, with which serpent charmers chiefly deal. The Spectacled Snake proper (*Naja tripudians*) is a closely related species. The well known Cobra di Capello is another. They are all noted for their deadly bite. The hollow fangs communicate with a poison gland, which being pressed in the act of biting, sends a few drops into the puncture. The venom quickly acts on the whole system, and death soon ensues.—*John Duns, D.D., in "Biblical Natural Science,"* 1868.

Verse 4 — "*The deaf adder.*" Certain it is, says a modern writer upon the Psalms, that the common adder or viper here in England, the bite of which too, by the way, is very venomous, if it is not wholly *deaf*, has the sense of hearing very imperfectly. This is evident from the danger there is of treading upon these animals, unless you happen to see them; for if they do not see you, and you do not disturb them, they never endeavour to avoid you, which when they are disturbed and do see you, they are very solicitous of doing. Allowing, then, that there is a species of these noxious animals, which either not having the sense of hearing at all, or having it only in a low degree, may very well be said to be deaf; this may help to explain the present poetical passage of the psalmist. He very elegantly compares the pernicious and destructive practices of wicked men to the venom of a serpent; and his mentioning this species of animals, seems to have brought to his mind another property of at least one sort of them, in which they likewise resembled perverse and obstinate sinners, who are deaf to all advice, utterly irreclaimable, and not to be persuaded. This the adder resembled, which is a very venomous animal, and moreover is deaf, or very near it. And perhaps his saying that *she stoppeth her ear*, may be no more than a poetical expression for deafness; just as the *mole*, which in common speech is said to be *blind*, might in a poetical phrase, be said to shut her eyes; as in fact she does when you expose her to the light. The next clause, "*Which refuseth to hear*," etc, is another poetical expression for the same thing.—*Samuel Burder, in "The Scripture Expositor,"* 1810.

Verse 4.—"*The deaf adder.*" Several of the serpent tribe are believed to be either quite deaf, or very dull of hearing. Perhaps that which is called the *puddeyan*, the "beaver-serpent," is more so than any other. I have frequently come close up to these reptiles; but they did not make any effort to move out of the way. They lurk in the path, and the victim on whom they pounce will expire within a few minutes after he is bitten.—*Joseph Roberts.*

Verse 4.—"*The deaf adder.*" The "*adder*," or "*asp*," is the *haje naja* or *cobra* of Egypt, according to Cuvier. The hearing of all the serpent tribes is imperfect, as all are destitute of a tympanic cavity, and of external openings to the ear. The "*deaf adder*" is not a particular species. The point of the rebuke is, the *pethen*, or "adder," here in question, *could* hear in some degree but *would* not; just as the unrighteous judges, or persecutors, of David could hear with their outward ears such appeals as he makes in verses 1, 2, but would not. The charmer usually could charm the serpent by shrill sounds, either of his voice or of the flute, the serpent's comparative deafness rendering it the more amenable to those sounds which it could hear. But exceptional cases occurred of a "*deaf adder*" which was *deaf* only in the sense that it refused to hear, or to be acted on. Also Jer. viii. 17; compare Eccl. x. 11.—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 4.—"*The deaf adder that stoppeth her ear.*" With respect to what is said of the animal's stopping its ears, it is not necessary to have recourse to the supposition of its actually doing so, which by some persons has been stated, but it is sufficient to know, that whilst some serpents are operated upon in the manner above described, others are partly or altogether insensible to the incantation.—*Richard Mant.*

Verse 4 (*second clause*).—This clause admits of a different construction, *like the deaf adder he stops his ear*, which some interpreters prefer, because an

adder cannot stop its ears, and need not stop them if naturally deaf, whereas it is by stopping his, that the wicked man becomes like a deaf adder.—*J. A Alexander.*

Verses 4, 5.—Experienced and skilful as the serpent-charmers are, however, they do not invariably escape with impunity. Fatal terminations to these exhibitions of the psylli art now and then occur; for there are still to be found "*deaf adders, which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.*" . . . . Roberts mentions the instance of a man who came to a gentleman's house to exhibit tame snakes, and on being told that a cobra, or hooded snake, was in a cage in the house, was asked if he could charm it; on his replying in the affirmative, the serpent was released from the cage, and no doubt, in a state of high irritation. The man began his incantations, and repeated his charms; but the snake darted at him, fastened upon his arm, and before night he was a corpse.—*Philip Henry Gosse, in* "*The Romance of Natural History*," 1861.

Verses 4, 5.—One day a rattlesnake entered our encampment. Among us was a Canadian who could play the flute, and who, to divert us, marched against the serpent with his new species of weapon. On the approach of his enemy, the haughty reptile curls himself into a spiral line, flattens his head, inflates his cheeks, contracts his lips, displays his envenomed fangs and his bold throat; his tongue flows like two flames of fire; his eyes are burning coals; his body, swollen with rage, rises and falls like the bellows of a forge; his dilated skin assumes a dull and scaly appearance; and his tail, whence proceeds the death-announcing sound, vibrates with such rapidity as to resemble a light vapour. The Canadian begins to play upon his flute—the serpent starts with surprise, and draws back his head. In proportion as he is struck with the magic notes, his eyes lose their fierceness; the oscillations of his tail become slower, and the sounds which it makes become weaker, and gradually die away. Less perpendicular upon their spiral line, the rings of the charmed serpent are by degrees expanded, and sink one after another on the ground in concentric circles. The shades of azure, green, white, and gold recover their brightness on his quivering skin, and slightly turning his head, he remains motionless, in the attitude of attention and pleasure. At this moment the Canadian advances a few steps, producing with the flute sweet and simple notes. The serpent, inclining his variegated neck, opens a passage with the head through the high grass, and begins to creep after the musician; stopping when he stops, and beginning to follow him again as soon as he advances forward. In this manner he was led out of the camp, attended by a great number of spectators, both savages and Europeans, who could scarcely believe their eyes, which had witnessed this effect of harmony.—*François Auguste, Viscount de Chateaubriand*, 1768—1848.

Verses 4. 5.—The serpent, when she begins to feel the charmer, clappeth one ear presently to the ground, and stoppeth the other ear with her tail, although by hearkening to the charmer, as some observe, she would be provoked to spit out her poison, and renew her age.* So hot is man upon his harlot sin, that he is deaf to all that would counsel him to the contrary; he stoppeth his ear, hardeneth his heart, stiffeneth his neck against the thunders of the law, the still voice of the gospel, the motions of the Spirit, and the convictions of his own conscience. When sin calls, they run through thick and thin for haste; when the world commands, how readily do they hearken, how quickly do they hear, how faithfully do they obey! but when the blessed God crieth to them, chargeth them by his unquestionable authority, beseecheth them for their own unchangeable felicity, they, like statues of men, rather than living creatures, stand still and stir not at all. Other things move swiftly to their centres; stones fall tumbling downward, sparks fly apace upward, coneys run with speed to their burrows, rivers with violence to the ocean, and yet silly man hangs off from his Maker, that neither entreaties nor threatenings, nor the word, nor the works

* This is a specimen of the old-fashioned *un*-natural history. No one will be misled by it.—*C. H. S.*

of God, nor hope of heaven, nor fear of hell, can quicken or hasten him to his happiness. Who would imagine that a reasonable soul should act so much against sense and reason?—*George Swinnock*, 1627—1673.

Verse 5.—"*Will not hearken.*" The Lord hath some of his elect ones whom he seeth walking in by-paths and crooked ways: the Lord giveth a commission to his servants, the ministers, and saith, Go invite and call yon soul to come to me, and say, Return, O Shulamite; but the soul stirs not: the Lord sends and calls again: yet with the deaf adder, he hearkeneth not to the voice of the enchanter: well, saith the Lord, "If you will not come; I will fetch you; if fair means will not do, foul means must; then he hisseth for the fly and the bee of affliction, and calls forth armies of trouble, and gives them commission to seize upon, and to lay siege to such a man or woman, and saith, Ply them with your cannon shot, till you make them yield, give up the keys and strike the sail; he sends sickness to their bodies, a consumption to their estate, death to their friends, shame to their reputation, a fire to their house, and the like, and bids them prey and spoil, till they see and acknowledge the hand of the Lord lifted up.—*J. Votier's "Survey of Effectual Calling,"* 1652.

Verse 6.—"*Break their teeth,*" *destroy the fangs* of these serpents, in which *their poison* is contained. This will amount to the same meaning as above. Save me from the *adders*, the sly and poisonous slanderers: save me also from the *lions*—the tyrannical and bloodthirsty men.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 6.—"*Great teeth.*" מְלָתָעוֹת, according to Michaelis and Gesenius, are the *eye-teeth*, which in lions are sharp and terrible.—*George Phillips, B.D., in "The Psalms in Hebrew: With a Commentary,"* 1846.

Verses 6—9.—David's enemies were strong and fierce as young lions: he therefore prayed that *their teeth might be broken*, even their strongest teeth, their *grinders*, with which they were ready to devour him; that so they might be disabled from doing mischief. They overwhelmed him like an inundation: but he desired it might prove a land-flood, which is soon wasted. They were about to shoot at him: but he would have their bows, or their arrows, to be shivered to pieces, and become like straw, and do no execution, and he prayed that they might waste insensibly as the snail, which leaves its substance all along its track; and that they might come to nothing, like an abortion. He also predicted, that their prosperous rage, (which resembled the crackling of thorns under a pot,) would soon be extinct, and produce no effect; while the Lord in his wrath would hurry them into speedy destruction; as a furious whirlwind drives a living man down a precipice, or into a dreadful pit.—*Thomas Scott*, 1747—1821.

Verse 7 (*first clause*).—Perowne renders this clause, "*Let them melt away, as water* (*which*) *runneth apace*," and says that the reference is to "water running away, and so wasted and lost."

Verse 7 (*first clause*).— In desert parts of Africa it has afforded much joy to fall in with a brook of water, especially when running in the direction of the journey, expecting it would prove a valuable companion. Perhaps before it accompanied us two miles it became invisible by sinking into the sand; but two miles farther along it would re-appear, and raise hopes of its continuance: but after running a few hundred yards, would sink finally into the sand, no more again to rise.—*John Campbell*, 1766—1840.

Verse 8.—"*As a snail which melteth away as it goeth,*" lit., "*which goeth in melting,*" (or slime,) the noun being in the accusative as describing the nature of the action, and the allusion being to the slimy trail which the snail leaves behind it, so that *it seems* to waste away. Evidently this is nothing more than a poetical hyperbole, and need not be explained, therefore, as a popular error

or a mistake in natural history.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne, B.D., in "The Book of Psalms; a New Translation, with Introductions and Notes,"* 1864.

Verse 8.—"*As a snail which melteth,*" etc. This is a very remarkable and not very intelligible passage. The Jewish Bible renders the passage in a way which explains the idea which evidently prevailed at the time the Psalms were composed: "As a snail let him melt as he passeth on." The ancients had an idea that the slimy track made by a snail as it crawled along was subtracted from the substance of its body, and that in consequence the farther it crept the smaller it became, until at last it wasted entirely away. The commentators on the Talmud took this view of the case. The Hebrew word, שַׁבְלוּל *shablul*, which undoubtedly does signify a snail of some kind, is thus explained:—"The Shablul is a creeping thing; when it comes out of its shell, saliva pours from itself until it becomes liquid, and so dies." Other explanations of this passage have been offered, but there is no doubt that the view taken by these commentators is the correct one, and that the psalmist, when he wrote the terrible series of denunciations in which the passage occurs, had in his mind the popular belief regarding the gradual wasting away of the snail as it "passeth on." It is needless to say that no particular species of snail is mentioned, and almost as needless to state that in Palestine there are many species of snails, to any or all of which these words are equally applicable.—*J. G. Wood*, in "*Bible Animals*," 1869.

Verse 8.—"*The untimely birth of a woman.*" The wicked are all, so to speak, human abortions; they are and for ever remain defective beings, who have not accomplished the great purpose of their existence. Heaven is the one end for which man is created, and he who falls short of it does not attain the purpose of his being; he is an eternal abortion.—*O. Prescott Hiller.*

Verse 8 (*second clause*).—David when he curseth the plots of wicked men, that though they have conceived mischief, and though they have gone with it a long time, and are ready to bring it forth, yet saith he, "*Let them be*" (that is, let their counsels and designs be) "*like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun:*" that is, let them be dashed and blasted, let them never bring forth their poisonous brood to the hurt and trouble of the world.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 9 (*first clause*).—"*Before your cooking vessels,*" etc. It would puzzle Œdipus himself to make any tolerable sense of the English translation of this verse. It refers to the usage of travellers in the East, who when journeying through the deserts, make a hasty blaze with the thorns which they collect, some green and full of sap, others dry and withered, for the purpose of dressing their food; in which circumstances, violent storms of wind not unfrequently arise, which sweep away their fuel and entire apparatus, before the vessels which they use become warm by the heat. An expressive and graphical image of the overwhelming ruin of wicked men!—*William Walford*, 1837.

Verse 9.—"*Before your pots feel the bramble.*" By this proverbial expression the psalmist describes the sudden eruption of the divine wrath; sudden and violent as the ascension of the dry bramble underneath the housewife's pot. The brightness of the flame which this material furnishes, the height to which it mounts in an instant, the fury with which it seems to rage on all sides of the vessel, give force, and even sublimity to the image, though taken from one of the commonest occurrences of the lowest life—a cottager's wife boiling her pot! The sense, then, will be: "Before your pots feel the bramble, he shall sweep them away in whirlwind and hurricane."—*Samuel Horsley*, 1733—1806.

Verse 9.—In all the book of God I do not remember any sentence so variously and differently translated as this verse. . . . . This variety of translations ariseth chiefly from the original Hebrew word, סִירוֹת *siroth*, which in the Hebrew tongue signifies, first, *pots* or *caldrons*, wherein flesh is sod, as Ex. xvi. 3; xxxviii. 3; Ezek. xi. 11. Secondly, *thorns*, and *pricks* of thorns and briers, as Isa. xxxiv. 13; Hosea ii. 8. Thirdly, because the pricks of the great bramble are very

sharp and hooked, this word is used to signify fish-hooks. Amos iv. 2. In all our English Bibles of the old, new, and Geneva translation, and some Latin Bibles, this word is taken to signify pots or caldrons; but the Septuagint, Hierome, vulgar Latin, Austine, Pagnine, Tremellius, and all others that I have seen, take this word in the second sense, for the sharp pricks of thorns and brambles. Here, certainly, this word signifies the sharp pricks of the great dog-bramble, which here in the Hebrew text is אָטָד *atad*, and is used (Jud. ix. 14, 15) in Jotham's parable to signify the bramble, which being made king of the trees, kindled a fire, which devoured the cedars of Lebanon. Now this bramble in the body, and every branch of it, is beset with sharp hooked pricks, some of which are green and have life and moisture in them, and though they be sharp, yet they are not so stiff and strong as to make any deep wound in a man's flesh. Others are greater, more hooked, and hardened by drying and parching with the vehement heat of the sun; and they strike to the quick, and hold fast, or tear where they catch hold of man's skin or flesh. The first are here called, _, living or green; the other are called, חָרִין, dried, or parched and hardened; and the prophetical psalmist affirmeth that "God who judgeth in the earth, will take away and destroy as with a tempestuous whirlwind, every one of them, as well the green as the dry," as Tremellius out of the original doth most truly translate the word. . . . The whole text runs thus: "Before they feel your thorns or pricks, O ye bramble, he will take away every one as with a whirlwind, as well the green as the dry." "*Before they*," that is, the righteous whom ye hate and persecute; "*do feel*," that is, have a full sense and understanding of your thorns or pricks, that is, of the sharpness, fury, and mischief which is in the heart and hand of all and every one among you; for every one in your band and congregation is a grievous thorn and sharp prick of the cursed bramble, sharply set and bent to do mischief in malice and fury to the people and church of God. "He that is God who judgeth in the earth" (as it is expressed in the eleventh verse, in the last words) "will take away as with a whirlwind" (that is, scatter and destroy tempestuously), "every one, as well the living and green as the dry and hardened." That is, of every sort banded together, as well the green-headed and young persecutors, sharp set, but not so strong to hurt, as the old and dry who are hardened in malice by long custom, and in power and policy are strong to do mischief.—*George Walker, in a Fast Sermon before the House of Commons*, 1644.

Verse 10.—"*The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance.*" When the just man seeth the vengeance and rejoiceth, it is not of malice, but of benevolence, either hoping that the wicked may by punishment be amended, or loving God's justice above men's persons, not being displeased with the punishment of the wicked, because it proceedeth from the Lord, nor desiring that the wicked may be acquitted from penalty because they deserve in justice to be punished.—*Nicholas Gibbens.*

Verse 10.—"*The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance.*" Not that he shall be glad of the vengeance purely as it is a hurt, or a suffering to the creature, but the righteous shall be glad when he seeth the vengeance of God, as it is a fulfilling of the threatening of God against the sin of man, and an evidence of his own holiness. Psalm lxiv. 9, 10.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 10.—"*He shall wash his feet*," etc. That is, he gets comfort and encouragement by seeing the Lord avenge his cause against his adversaries.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 10.—"*He shall wash his feet in the blood*," etc. As the victorious survivor of a conflict, walking over the battle-field, might be said to do.—*R. T Society's Notes.*

Verse 10.—When angels execute God's judgments upon sinners, the saints see much in it; they see matter of fear and praise; of fear, in that God's power, wrath, and hatred are manifested in them against sin and sinners; of praise, in that themselves are delivered and justice is performed. When the wicked are

taken away by a divine stroke, by the hand of justice, and God hath the glory of his justice. *the righteous rejoice at it:* but is that all? No, "*he washeth his feet in the blood of the wicked;*" that is, by this judgment he fears and reforms. It is a metaphor taken from the practice of those parts where they went barefoot, or with sandals, and so contracted much filth, and used to wash and cleanse their feet when they came in; so here, the godly seeing the hand of God upon the wicked, fears, and judges himself for his sins, purges his conscience and affections, and stands now in awe of that God who hath stricken the wicked for those sins which he himself in part is guilty of. Waldus, a man of note in Lyons, seeing one struck dead in his presence, he washed his hands in his blood; for presently he gave alms to the poor, instructed his family in the true knowledge of God, and exhorted all that came unto him to repentance and holiness of life.—*William Greenhill*, 1691—1677.

Verse 10.—No doubt, at the sight of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim destroyed, angels saw cause to rejoice and sing, "Hallelujah." Wickedness was swept away; earth was lightened of a burden; justice, the justice of God, was highly exalted; love to his other creatures was displayed in freeing them from the neighbourhood of hellish contaminations. On the same principles (entering, however, yet deeper into the mind of the Father, and sympathising to the full in his justice), the Lord Jesus himself, and each one of his members shall cry, "Hallelujah," over Antichrist's ruined hosts. Rev. xix. 3. "*The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.*" He shall be refreshed at the end of his journey (John xiii. 5; Luke vii. 44; Gen. xviii. 4), he shall wipe off all the dust of the way, and end its weariness by entering into that strange, that divine joy over sin destroyed, justice honoured, the law magnified, vengeance taken for the insult done to Godhead, the triumph of the Holy One over the unholy. It is not merely *the time when* that joy begins—it is also the occasion and cause of that day's rapturous delight.—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 10.—A broad and vital distinction is to be made between *desire for the gratification of personal vengeance*, and zeal for the vindication *of the glory of God*. "The glory of God" includes necessarily the real good of the offender and the well-being of society. Desire for *retaliation* is always wrong; desire for *retribution* may be in the highest degree praiseworthy. For personal motives only can I desire retaliation upon the wrong-doer; but for motives most disinterested and noble I may desire retribution.—*R. A. Bertram, in* "*The Imprecatory Psalms*," 1867.

Verse 11.—"*So that a man shall say, Verily*," etc. This shall be said not by *a man*, nor by any particular man, but by *men* in general, by man as opposed to God. The particle translated "*verily*" really means *only*, and denotes that this and nothing else is true.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 11.—"*So that*," etc. There is something worth noting from the connexion of this verse with the context, and is implied in the first word, "*so that*," which joins this verse with the former parts of this Psalm, and shows this to be an illation from them. What? did God so suddenly, "as with a whirlwind," overthrow those wicked judges who lorded it over his people? did he make those "lions" melt like snails? did he confirm the joints of his people, which were little before, trembling and smiting one against another, as if they had been so many forlorn wretches exposed and cast forth, and no eye to pity them; as if they had been floating with Moses upon the sea in a basket of bulrushes, without any pilot to guide them, and even ready to cry out with the disciple, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" Did he then command a calm, and bring them to the haven where they would be? did he turn their howling like dragons and chattering like cranes, under the whips and saws of tyrannical taskmasters, into a song of joy and triumph? did he dismantle himself of that cloud wherein for a time he had so enveloped himself, that he seemed not to behold the pressures of his people? did he, I say, then step in to his people's rescue,

by breaking their yokes as in the day of Midian, and kissing them with the kisses of his mouth? "*So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.*" Observe: Though the passages of God's providence may seem so rugged and uncouth, as if they were destructive to his church, and likely to put out the eye of his own glory; yet our God will so dispose of them in the close, that they shall have an advantageous tendency, to the setting forth of his honour and our good.—*John Hinckley*, 1657.

Verse 11.—Some of the judgments of God are a shallow, or a ford, over which a lamb may wade; every child may read the meaning of them; and "*a man*"—any ordinary man—"*may say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.*"—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 11.—This judging here does not refer to the judgment to come, at the last day, when there shall be a general convention of quick and dead before the Lord's dreadful tribunal; though so, 'tis most true *affore tempus*, that there will be a time when God will ride his circuit here in a solemn manner, "so that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth;" but that is not the scope of this place. 'Tis in the present tense, ο κρινων, *that now judgeth*, or *is now judging* the earth and the inhabitants thereof; and therefore it must be understood of a judgment on this side, the judgment of the great day; and so God judges the earth, or in the earth, three manner of ways. First, by a providential ordering and wise disposal of all the affairs of all creatures. Secondly, in relieving the oppressed, and pleading the cause of the innocent. Thirdly, in overthrowing and plaguing the wicked doers.—*John Hinckley.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 3.—I. The natural effects of original sin are seen in early suffering and death. II. Its moral effects are seen in the early commission of actual sin. III. Early depravity is evinced in the conscious guilt of telling lies.—*G. R.*

Verse 3 (*first clause*).—The inner pandemonium, or the calendar of the heart's crime.

Verse 4 (*first clause*).—A generation of serpents.—*T. Adams's Sermon.*

Verse 4.—Sin as a poison. Poisons may be attractive in colour and taste, slow or rapid in action, painful in effect, withering, soporific or maddening. In all cases deadly.

Verse 5.—The serpent charmer. I. He charms with moral suasion, promise, threatening, etc. II. He charms wisely, earnestly, affectionately, argumentatively. III. He charms in vain; the will is averse. Hence the need of divine grace and of the gospel.

Verse 8.—The snail-like course of ungodly men. Their sin destroys their property, health, time, influence, life.

Verse 11.—Remarkable cases of divine judgments and their results.

PSALM LIX.

To the Chief Musician.—*Strange that the painful events in David's life should end in enriching the repertoire of the national minstrelsy. Out of a sour, ungenerous soil spring up the honey-bearing flowers of psalmody. Had he never been cruelly hunted by Saul, Israel and the church of God in after ages would have missed this song. The music of the sanctuary is in no small degree indebted to the trials of the saints. Affliction is the tuner of the harps of sanctified songsters.* Altaschith. *Another* "destroy not" *Psalm. Whom God preserves Satan cannot destroy. The Lord can even preserve the lives of his prophets by the very ravens that would naturally pick out their eyes. David always found a friend to help him when his case was peculiarly dangerous, and that friend was in his enemy's household; in this instance it was Michal, Saul's daughter, as on former occasions it had been Jonathan, Saul's son.* Michtam of David. *This is the Fifth of the Golden Secrets of David: God's chosen people have many such.* When Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him. *Great efforts are made to carry the Psalms away to other authors and seasons than those assigned in the headings, it being the fashion just now to prove one's learning by disagreeing with all who have gone before. Perhaps in a few years the old titles will be as much reverenced as they are now rejected. There are spasms in these matters, and in many other things among the would-be "intellectuals" of the schools. We are not anxious to show our readiness at conjecture, and therefore are content with reading this Psalm in the light of the circumstance here mentioned; it does not seem unsuitable to any verse, and in some the words are very appropriate to the specified occasion.*

DIVISIONS.—*In verses* 1 *and* 2 *he prays, in* 3 *and* 4 *he complains of his woes, and again in verse* 5 *he prays. Here he inserts a Selah, and ends one portion of his song. In* 6 *and* 7 *he renews his complaint, in* 8, 9, 10 *declares his confidence in God, and in* 11, 12, 13 *lifts up his heart in prayer; closing another part of his Psalm with Selah. Then he prays again in* 14, 15, *and afterwards betakes himself to singing.*

EXPOSITION.

DELIVER me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me.

2 Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men.

1. "*Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God.*" They were all round the house with the warrant of authority, and a force equal to the carrying of it out. He was to be taken dead or alive, well or ill, and carried to the slaughter. No prowess could avail him to break the cordon of armed men, neither could any eloquence stay the hand of his bloody persecutor. He was taken like a bird in a net, and no friend was near to set him free. Unlike the famous starling, he did not cry, "I can't get out," but his faith uttered quite another note. Unbelief would have suggested that prayer was a waste of breath, but not so thought the good man, for he makes it his sole resort. He cries for deliverance and leaves ways and means with his God. "*Defend me from them that rise up against me.*" Saul was a king, and therefore sat in high places, and used all his authority to crush David; the persecuted one therefore beseeches the Lord to set him on high also, only in another sense. He asks to be lifted up, as into a lofty tower, beyond the reach of his adversary. Note how he sets the title "*My God,*" over against the word "*mine enemies.*" This is the right method of effectually catching and quenching the fiery darts of the enemy upon the shield of faith. God is our God, and therefore deliverance and defence are ours.

2. "*Deliver me from the workers of iniquity.*" Saul was treating him very unjustly, and besides that was pursuing a tyrannical and unrighteous course

towards others, therefore David the more vehemently appeals against him. Evil men were in the ascendant at court, and were the ready tools of the tyrant, against these also he prays. Bad men in a bad cause may be pleaded against without question. When a habitation is beset by thieves, the good man of the house rings the alarm-bell; and in these verses we may hear it ring out loudly, "*deliver me*," "*defend me*," "*deliver me*," "*save me*." Saul had more cause to fear than David had, for the invincible weapon of prayer was being used against him, and heaven was being aroused to give him battle. "*And save me from bloody men.*" As David remembers how often Saul had sought to assassinate him, he knows what he has to expect from that quarter and from the king's creatures and minions who were watching for him. David represents his enemy in his true colours before God; the bloodthirstiness of the foe is a fit reason for the interposition of the righteous God, for the Lord abhors all those who delight in blood.

3 For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not *for* my transgression, nor *for* my sin, O LORD.

4 They run and prepare themselves without *my* fault; awake to help me, and behold.

3. "*For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul.*" They were in ambuscade for the good man's life. He knew their design and cried to God to be rescued from it. Like wild beasts they crouched, and waited to make the fatal spring; but their victim used effectual means to baffle them, for he laid the matter before the Lord. While the enemy lies waiting in the posture of a beast, we wait before God in the posture of prayer, for God waits to be gracious to us and terrible towards our foes. "*The mighty are gathered against me.*" None of them were absent from the muster when a saint was to be murdered. They were too fond of such sport to be away. The men at arms who ought to have been fighting their country's battles, are instead thereof hunting a quiet citizen; the gigantic monarch is spending all his strength to slay a faithful follower. "*Not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O Lord.*" He appeals to Jehovah that he had done no ill. His only fault was, that he was too valiant and too gracious, and was, besides, the chosen of the Lord, therefore the envious king could not rest till he had washed his hands in the blood of his too popular rival. We shall always find it to be a great thing to be innocent; if it does not carry our cause before an earthly tribunal, it will ever prove the best of arguments in the court of conscience, and a standing consolation when we are under persecution. Note the repetition of his declaration of integrity. David is sure of his innocence. He dares repeat the plea.

4. "*They run and prepare themselves without my fault.*" They are all alive and active, they are swift to shed blood. They prepare and use their best tactics; they besiege me in my house, and lay their ambuscades as for some notable enemy. They come up fully armed to the attack, and assail me with all the vigour and skill of a host about to storm a castle; and all for no cause, but out of gratuitous malice. So quick are they to obey their cruel master, that they never stay to consider whether their errand is a good one or not; they run at once, and buckle on their harness as they run. To be thus gratuitously attacked is a great grief. To a brave man the danger causes little distress of mind compared with the injustice to which he is subjected. It was a cruel and crying shame that such a hero as David should be hounded down as if he were a monster, and beset in his house like a wild beast in its den. "*Awake to help me, and behold.*" When others go to sleep, keep thou watch, O God. Put forth thy might. Arouse thee from thine inaction. Only look at thy servant's sad condition and thy hand will be sure to deliver me. We see how thorough was the psalmist's faith in the mercy of his Lord, for he is satisfied that if the Lord do but look on his case it will move his active compassion.

5 Thou therefore, O LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen: be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah.

5. "*Thou*," thyself, work for me personally, for the case needs thine interposition. "*Therefore*," because I am unjustly assailed, and cannot help myself. "*O Lord*," everliving, "*God of Hosts*," able to rescue me; "*the God of Israel*," pledged by covenant to redeem thine oppressed servant; "*awake to visit all the heathen*," arouse thy holy mind, bestow thy sacred energies, punish the heathen among thine Israel, the falsehearted who say they are Jews and are not, but do lie. And when thou art about the business, let all the nations of thine enemies, and all the heathenish people at home and abroad know that thou art upon circuit, judging and punishing. It is the mark of a thoughtful prayer that the titles which are in it applied to God are appropriate, and are, as it were, congruous to the matter, and fitted to add force to the argument. Shall Jehovah endure to see his people oppressed? Shall the God of hosts permit his enemies to exult over his servant? Shall the faithful God of a chosen people leave his chosen to perish? The name of God is, even in a literal sense, a fortress and high tower for all his people. What a forceful petition is contained in the words, "*awake to visit*"! Actively punish, in wisdom judge, with force chastise. "*Be not merciful to any wicked transgressors.*" Be merciful to them as men, but not as transgressors; if they continue hardened in their sin, do not wink at their oppression. To wink at sin in transgressors will be to leave the righteous under their power, therefore do not pass by their offences but deal out the due reward. The psalmist feels that the overthrow of oppression which was so needful for himself must be equally desirable for multitudes of the godly placed in like positions, and therefore he prays for the whole company of the faithful, and against the entire confraternity of traitors. "*Selah.*" With such a subject before us we may well pause. Who would not sit still and consider, when vengeance is being meted out to all the enemies of God? How wrong is that state of mind which hates to hear of the punishment of the wicked!

6 They return at evening: they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.

7 Behold, they belch out with their mouth: swords *are* in their lips: for who, *say they*, doth hear?

6. "*They return at evening.*" Like wild beasts that roam at night, they come forth to do mischief. If foiled in the light, they seek the more congenial darkness in which to accomplish their designs. They mean to break into the house in the dead of night. "*They make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.*" Howling with hunger for their prey, they sneak round and round the walls, prowling with stealthy footstep, and barking in unamiable concert. David compares his foes to Eastern dogs, despised, unowned, loathsome, degraded, lean, and hungry, and he represents them as howling with disappointment, because they cannot find the food they seek. Saul's watchmen and the cruel king himself must have raved and raged fiercely when they found the image and the pillow of goats' hair in the bed instead of David. Vain were their watchings, the victim had been delivered, and that by the daughter of the man who desired his blood. Go, ye dogs, to your kennels and gnaw your bones, for this good man is not meat for your jaws.

7. "*Behold, they belch out with their mouth.*" The noisy creatures are so remarkable in their way, that attention is called to them with a *behold*. *Ecce homines*, might we not say, *Ecce canes!* Their malicious speech gushes from them as from a bubbling fountain. The wicked are voluble in slander; their vocabulary of abuse is copious, and as detestable as it is abundant. What torrents of wrathful imprecation will they pour on the godly! They need no prompters,

their feelings force for themselves their own vent, and fashion their own expressions. "*Swords are in their lips.*" They speak daggers. Their words pierce like rapiers, and cleave like cutlasses. As the cushion of a lion's paw conceals his claw, so their soft ruby lips contain bloody words. "*For who, say they, doth hear?*" They are free from all restraint, they fear no God in heaven, and the government on earth is with them. When men have none to call them to account, there is no accounting for what they will do. He who neither fears God nor regards man sets out upon errands of oppression with gusto, and uses language concerning it of the most atrociously cruel sort. David must have been in a singular plight when he could hear the foul talk and hideous braggings of Saul's black guards around the house. After the style in which a Cavalier would have cursed a Puritan, or Claverhouse a Covenanter, the Saulites swore at the upstart whom the king's majesty had sent them to arrest. David called them dogs, and no doubt a pretty pack they were, a cursed cursing company of curs. When they said, "Who doth hear?" God was listening, and this David knew, and therefore took courage.

8 But thou, O LORD, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.

9 *Because of* his strength will I wait upon thee: for God *is* my defence.

10 The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see *my desire* upon mine enemies.

8. "*But thou, O Lord, shalt laugh at them.*" He speaks to God as to one who is close at hand. He points to the liers in wait and speaks to God about them. They are laughing at me, and longing for my destruction, but thou hast the laugh of them seeing thou hast determined to send them away without their victim, and made fools of by Michal. The greatest, cleverest, and most malicious of the enemies of the church are only objects of ridicule to the Lord; their attempts are utterly futile, they need give no concern to our faith. "*Thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.*" As if David had said—What are these fellows who lie in ambush? And what is the king their master, if God be on my side? If not only these but all the heathen nations were besetting the house, yet Jehovah would readily enough disappoint them and deliver me. In the end of all things it will be seen how utterly comtemptible and despicable are all the enemies of the cause and kingdom of God. He is a brave man who sees this to-day when the enemy is in great power, and while the church is often as one shut up and besieged in his house.

9. "*Because of his strength will I wait upon thee.*" Is my persecutor strong? Then, my God, for this very reason I will turn myself to thee, and leave my matters in thy hand. It is a wise thing to find in the greatness of our difficulties a reason for casting ourselves upon the Lord.

> "And when it seems no chance nor change
> From grief can set me free,
> Hope finds its strength in helplessness,
> And, patient, waits on thee."

"*For God is my defence,*" my high place, my fortress, the place of my resort in the time of my danger. If the foe be too strong for me to cope with him, I will retreat into my castle, where he cannot reach me.

10. "*The God of my mercy shall prevent me.*" God who is the giver and fountain of all the undeserved goodness I have received, will go before me and lead my way as I march onward. He will meet me in my time of need. Not alone shall I have to confront my foes, but he whose goodness I have long tried and proved will gently clear my way, and be my faithful protector. How frequently have we met with preventing mercy—the supply prepared before the need occurred, the refuge built before the danger arose Far ahead into the

future the foreseeing grace of heaven has projected itself, and forestalled every difficulty. "*God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies.*" Observe that the words, "*my desire*," are not in the original. From the Hebrew we are taught that David expected to see his enemies without fear. God will enable his servant to gaze steadily upon the foe without trepidation; he shall be calm, and self-possessed, in the hour of peril; and ere long he shall look down on the same foes discomfited, overthrown, destroyed. When Jehovah leads the way victory follows at his heels. See God, and you need not fear to see your enemies. Thus the hunted David, besieged in his own house by traitors, looks only to God, and exults over his enemies.

11 Slay them not, lest my people forget: scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord, our shield.

12 *For* the sin of their mouth *and* the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride: and for cursing and lying *which* they speak.

13 Consume *them* in wrath, consume *them*, that they *may* not *be:* and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah.

11. "*Slay them not, lest my people forget.*" It argues great faith on David's art, that even while his house was surrounded by his enemies he is yet so fully sure of their overthrow, and so completely realises it in his own mind, that he puts in a detailed petition that they may not be too soon or too fully exterminated. God's victory over the craft and cruelty of the wicked is so easy and so glorious that it seems a pity to end the conflict too soon. To sweep away the plotters all at once were to end the great drama of retribution too abruptly. Nay, let the righteous be buffeted a little longer, and let the boasting oppressor puff and brag through his little hour, it will help to keep Israel in mind of the Lord's justice, and make the brave party who side with God's champion accustomed to divine interpositions. It were a pity for good men to be without detractors, seeing that virtue shines the brighter for the foil of slander. Enemies help to keep the Lord's servants awake. A lively, vexatious devil is less to be dreaded than a sleepy, forgetful spirit which is given to slumber. "*Scatter them by thy power.*" Blow them to and fro, like chaff in the wind. Let the foemen live as a vagabond race. Make Cains of them. Let them be living monuments of divine power, advertisements of heaven's truth. To the fullest extent let divine justice be illustrated in them. "*And bring them down.*" Like rotten fruit from a tree. From the seats of power which they disgrace, and the positions of influence which they pollute, let them be hurled into humiliation. This was a righteous wish, and if it be untempered by the gentleness of Jesus, we must remember that it is a soldier's prayer, and the wish of one who was smarting under injustice and malice of no ordinary kind. "*O Lord, our shield.*" David felt himself to be the representative of the religious party in Israel, and therefore he says "*our shield*," speaking in the name of all those who make Jehovah their defence. We are in good company when we hide beneath the buckler of the Eternal; meanwhile he who is the shield of his people is the scatterer of their enemies.

12. "*For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride.*" Such dreadful language of atheism and insolence deserves a fit return. As they hope to take their victims, so let them be taken themselves, entangled in their own net, arrested in the midst of their boastful security. Sins of the lips are real sins, and punishable sins. Men must not think because their hatred gets no further than railing and blasphemy that therefore they shall be excused. He who takes the will for the deed, will take the word for the deed and deal with men accordingly. Wretches who are persecutors in talk, burners and stabbers with the tongue, shall have a reckoning for their would-be

transgressions. Pride though it show not itself in clothes, but only in speech, is a sin; and persecuting pride, though it pile no fagots at Smithfield, but only revile with its lips, shall have to answer for it among the unholy crew of inquisitors. "*And for cursing and lying which they speak.*" Sins, like hounds, often hunt in couples. He who is not ashamed to curse before God, will be sure to lie unto men. Every swearer is a liar. Persecution leads on to perjury. They lie and swear to it. They curse and give a lying reason for their hate. This shall not go unnoted of the Lord, but shall bring down its recompense. How often has it happened that while haughty speeches have been fresh in the mouths of the wicked they have been overtaken by avenging providence, and made to see their mischief recoil upon themselves!

13. "*Consume them in wrath.*" As if he had changed his mind and would have them brought to a speedy end, or if spared would have them exist as ruins, he cries, "*consume them,*" and he redoubles his cry, "*consume them;*" nay, he gives a triple note, "*that they may not be.*" Revilers of God whose mouths pour forth such filth as David was on this occasion obliged to hear, are not to be tolerated by a holy soul; indignation must flame forth, and cry to God against them. When men curse the age and the place in which they live, common humanity leads the righteous to desire that they may be removed. If they could be reformed it would be infinitely better; but if they cannot, if they must and will continue to be like mad dogs in a city, then let them cease to be. Who can desire to see such a generation perpetuated? "*And let them know;*" *i.e.*, let all the nations know, "*that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth.*" He whose government is universal fixes his headquarters among his chosen people, and there in special he punishes sin. So David would have all men see. Let even the most remote nations know that the great moral Governor has power to destroy ungodliness, and does not wink at iniquity in any, at any time, or in any place. When sin is manifestly punished it is a valuable lesson to all mankind. The overthrow of a Napoleon is a homily for all monarchs, the death of a Tom Paine a warning to all infidels, the siege of Paris a sermon to all cities. *Selah.* Good cause there is for this rest, when a theme so wide and important is introduced. Solemn subjects ought not to be hurried over; nor should the condition of the heart while contemplating themes so high be a matter of indifference. Reader, bethink thee. Sit thou still awhile and consider the ways of God with man.

14 And at evening let them return; *and* let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.

15 Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied.

14. Here verse six is repeated, as if the songster defied his foes and revelled in the thought of their futile search, their malice, their disappointment, their rage, their defeated vigilance, their wasted energy. He laughs to think that all the city would know how they were deceived, and all Israel would ring with the story of the image and the goats' hair in the bed. Nothing was more a subject of Oriental merriment than a case in which the crafty are deceived, and nothing more makes a man the object of derision than to be outwitted by a woman, as in this instance Saul and his base minions were by Michal. The warrior poet hears in fancy the howl of rage in the council of his foes when they found their victim clean escaped from their hands.

15. "*Let them wander up and down for meat.*" Like dogs that have missed the expected carcass, let them go up and down dissatisfied, snapping at one another, and too disappointed to be quiet and take the matter easily. "*And grudge if they be not satisfied.*" Let them act like those who cannot believe that they have lost their prey: like a herd of Oriental dogs, unhoused, unkennelled, let them prowl about seeking a prey which they shall never find. Thus the menial followers of Saul paraded the city in vain hope of satisfying their malice

and their master. "Surely," say they, "we shall have him yet. We cannot endure to miss him. Perhaps he is in yonder corner, or concealed in such a hidingplace. We must have him. We grudge him his life. Our lust for his blood is hot, nor can we be persuaded but that we shall light upon him." See the restlessness of wicked men; this will increase as their enmity to God increases, and in hell it will be their infinite torment. What is the state of the lost, but the condition of an ambitious camp of rebels, who have espoused a hopeless cause, and will not give it up, but are impelled by their raging passions to rave on against the cause of God, of truth, and of his people.

16 But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.

17 Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God *is* my defence, *and* the God of my mercy.

16. "*But I will sing of thy power.*" The wicked howl, but I sing and will sing. Their power is weakness, but thine is omnipotence; I see them vanquished and thy power victorious, and for ever and ever will I sing of thee. "*Yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning.*" When those lovers of darkness find their game is up, and their midnight howlings die away, then will I lift up my voice on high and praise the lovingkindness of God without fear of being disturbed. What a blessed morning will soon break for the righteous, and what a song will be theirs! Sons of the morning, ye may sigh to-night, but joy will come on the wings of the rising sun. Tune your harps even now, for the signal to commence the eternal music will soon be given; the morning cometh and your sun shall go no more down for ever. "*For thou hast been my defence.*" The song is for God alone, and it is one which none can sing but those who have experienced the lovingkindness of their God. Looking back upon a past all full of mercy, the saints will bless the Lord with their whole hearts, and triumph in him as the high place of their security. "*And refuge in the day of my trouble.*" The greater our present trials the louder will our future songs be, and the more intense our joyful gratitude. Had we no day of trouble, where were our season of retrospective thanksgiving? David's besetment by Saul's bloodhounds creates an opportunity for divine interposition and so for triumphant praise.

17. "*Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing.*" What transport is here! What a monopolising of all his emotions for the one object of praising God! Strength has been overcome by strength; not by the hero's own prowess, but by the might of God alone. See how the singer girds himself with the almightiness of God, and calls it all his own by faith. Sweet is the music of experience, but it is all for God; there is not even a stray note for man, for self, or for human helpers. "*For God is my defence, and the God of my mercy.*" With full assurance he claims possession of the Infinite as his protection and security. He sees God in all, and all his own. Mercy rises before him, conspicuous and manifold, for he feels he is undeserving, and security is with him, undisturbed and impregnable, for he knows that he is safe in divine keeping. Oh, choice song! My soul would sing it now in defiance of all the dogs of hell. Away, away, ye adversaries of my soul, the God of my mercy will keep ye all at bay—

"Nor shall th' infernal lion rend
Whom he designs to keep."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

This Psalm has in its stern contents something no doubt strange to our ears. But never let us omit to distinguish from each other the times and diverse economies, and to place ourselves, as far as possible, in sympathy with the experience of a heart which burned for nothing more than for the glorifying of God in this world. Everything that tended to obscure the theocratic relation of God to his people, called up in the soul of David the most vehement passion. The scornful oppression with which Saul and his venal satellites visited him, the man of God, could not but have, upon the eyes of all, the appearance as if Jehovah were no longer Lord in his own land, who inexorably adhered to his laws and rights. Treason, falsehood, and every kind of evil then prevailed unchecked. What wonder, that as formerly Moses in the wilderness was provoked against the stiff-necked people, so also David, whom the awful holiness of God had already made to tremble, should feel his spirit stirred against the ungodly who surrounded him, and should say, with Job, "My bowels boiled within me."—*Frederick William Krummacher, D.D., in "David, the King of Israel,"* 1867.

Verse 1.—"*O my God.*" There are two pleas which the psalmist makes use of; one was, that God was *his God*, ver. 1; the other was the *power* and *strength* of his *enemies*. It is a blessed thing to have the covenant to fly to in all times of straits and troubles; there is always an anchor-hold of hope there. "*My God,*" is such a plea as infinitely over-balances all other things. He has engaged himself to do his people good; and it is time for him to work when the enemy exalts himself. The church's enemies are never so near destruction as when they think they have nothing to do, but take and divide the spoil. We may plead God's promise and the enemies' power too; both are a ground of hope to a believer in Jesus.—*John Hill* (1711—1746), *in "Sermons on Several Occasions."*

Verse 1.—"*That rise up against me.*" He insists upon the strength and violence of his enemies, with the view of exciting his mind to greater fervour in the duty of prayer. These he describes as *rising up* against him, in which expression he alludes, not simply to the audacity or fierceness of their assaults, but to the eminent superiority of power which they possessed; and yet he asks that he may be lifted up on high, as it were, above the reach of this overswelling inundation.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 3 (*first clause*).—On the expression, "they lie in wait for my *soul*," compare 1 Sam. xix. 11, "And Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, If thou save not thy life [*soul*] to night, to morrow thou shalt be slain;" and Ps. vii. 2, 5.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 3.—"*The mighty are gathered against me,*" is rendered by Chandler, *The mighty are turned aside to lay snares against me.*

Verse 3.—"*The mighty are gathered against me.*" As if he would say, "But I am weak, be thou, however, my strength, and vindicate my innocence.—*Arnd.*

Verses 3, 4.—He pleads his own innocency, not as to God, but as to his persecutors. Note, 1. The innocency of the godly will not secure them from the malignity of the wicked. Those that are harmless like doves, yet for Christ's sake are hated of all men, as if they were noxious like serpents, and obnoxious accordingly. 2. Though our innocency will not secure us from troubles, yet it will greatly support and comfort us under our troubles. The testimony of our conscience for us, that we have behaved ourselves well toward those that have behaved themselves ill towards us, will be very much our rejoicing in the day of evil. If we are conscious to ourselves of our innocency, we may with humble confidence appeal to God, and beg of him to plead our injured cause which he will do in due time.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 4.—"*They run*," as armed warriors rushing to the assault (Ps. xviii. 29). The Hebrew for "prepare themselves," (כּוּן) means also "they *establish* themselves;" they make firm their footing, like forces assaulting a city. Job xxx. 14.—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 4.—"*They run and prepare.*" The zeal and diligence of the wicked in the cause of unrighteousness might well reprove the languor and tardiness of saints in the work of faith and labour of love. In the church of God nothing is the source of more mischief than the want of true zeal and liveliness. It is only when "many run to and fro" that "knowledge shall be increased."—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 4.—"*Without fault.*" As it respected Saul, he was a faithful subject and an obedient son-in-law.—*Benjamin Boothroyd.*

Verse 4.—"*Awake to help me*," literally, *Awake to meet me.* In time of temptation the Lord seems to be absent from us, and not to observe our distress—to be, as it were, as Jesus, in the storm, is described as having been "asleep in the hinder part of the ship." Mark iv. 38. But it is only an appearance; the Lord neither slumbers nor sleeps (Ps. cxxi. 4): he is always ready to come to our help when we call upon him.—*O. Prescott Hiller.*

Verse 4.—"*And behold.*" The expression is one which savours at once of faith and of the infirmity of the flesh. In speaking of God, as if his eyes had been hitherto shut to the wrongs which he had suffered, and needed now for the first time to be opened for the discovery of them, he expresses himself according to the weakness of our human apprehension. On the other hand, in calling upon God *to behold* his cause, he shows his faith by virtually acknowledging that nothing was hid from his providential cognisance.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 5.—"*O Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel.*" In time of straits we should set our eyes most upon those styles of God which most serve to strengthen our faith, especially such as hold forth his power and goodwill to employ his power for us.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 5.—"*Lord God of hosts.*" Yahveh, *Elohim, Tsebaoth;* as in lxxx. 4, 19; lxxxiv. 8. Comp. 2 Sam. v. 10; 1 Kings xix. 10, 14; Ps. lxxxix. 8.—*From "The Psalms translated from the Hebrew, with Notes chiefly exegetical. By William Kay, D.D.*, 1871."

Verse 5.—"*Lord God of hosts.*" Some have thought this equivalent to God of battles; the true force of the epithet, however, is, "Sovereign of the stars, material hosts of heaven, and of the angels their inhabitants."—*A. A. Hodge, in "Outlines of Theology,"* 1866.

Verse 5.—1. "*God of hosts*," and therefore *able;* 2. "*God of Israel*," and therefore *willing.*—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 6.—"*At evening.*" The *evening* expresses the time of calamity and want, and alludes to the wild beasts which are wont in the *evening* to go forth in quest of prey.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 6.—"*They make a noise like a dog.*" The noise I heard then I shall never forget. To say that if all the sheep-dogs in going to Smithfield on a market-day, had been kept on the constant bark and pitted against the yelping curs upon all the carts in London, they could have given any idea of the canine uproar that now first astonished me, would be to make the feeblest of images. The whole city rang with one vast riot. Down below me, at Tophane; over about Stamboul; far away at Scutari; the whole sixty thousand dogs that are said to overrun Constantinople, appeared engaged in the most active extermination of each other, without a moment's cessation. The yelping, howling, barking, growling, and snarling, were all merged into one uniform and continuous even sound, as the noise of frogs becomes, when heard at a distance. For hours there was no lull. I went to sleep and woke again, and still, with my windows open, I heard the same tumult going on; nor was it until daybreak that anything like tranquillity was restored.—*Albert Smith, in "A Month at Constantinople,"* 1850.

Verse 6.—In bringing their secret plans to bear, they are represented as hungry dogs, prowling about the city in the darkness for prey; ranging, each with his own object, but in one common cause. To take in the full force of this metaphor it must be remembered that in Eastern cities formerly, as at the present day, it was the custom to cast out all the refuse of food—bones, offal, etc.—into the streets, which was consumed chiefly by dogs, great numbers of which were kept, as it would seem, for that particular purpose. With this idea in mind the metaphor has great propriety in its application to Christ's enemies.

"Every evening they return,
They howl like dogs,
And surround the city." *William Hill Tucker.*

Verses 6, 7.—This is a continued metaphor, which must be well observed, of a famished and rabid dog, unable to satisfy either its hunger or thirst; and describes men, howling formerly like dogs, pursuing, seizing all good things for themselves, and devouring; but now destitute of all things, unable to quench their cupidity, despised, miserable, and desperate wanderers. Such did Saul and his messengers sent against David in Najoth Rama show themselves to be, and give the prelude to their coming misery.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verses 6, 7.—1. They are diligent about it, "*They return at evening.*" 2. *Mad*, and set to do it, "*They make a noise like a dog*," and threaten boldly. 3. Unwearied and obdurate in their purpose: "*They go round about the city.*" 4. Impudent, and brag what they will do to me: "*Behold, they belch out with their mouth.*" 5. And their words are bloody: "*Swords are in their lips.*"—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 7.—"*Behold, they belch out with their mouth*," etc. Bark like dogs, so Aben Ezra; or, *bubble out*, as a fountain bubbles out with water; so they cast out their wickedness in great abundance (see Jer. vi. 7); the phrase denotes the abundance of evil things and wicked speeches that come out of their mouths, which showed the naughtiness of their hearts; so David's enemies blustered and threatened what they would do to him could they find him; and Christ's enemies poured out their wicked charges of blasphemy and sedition against him in great plenty, and without proof.—*John Gill.*

Verse 8.—God seeth and smileth, he looketh and laugheth at these giants; he sitteth in heaven far above their reach; neither doth he much trouble himself about the matter; no more should we, but trust in him, and know that there is a counsel in heaven, that will dash the mould of all contrary counsels upon the earth, as the stone cut out of the mountain did the four great monarchies. Dan. ii. 34. And therefore though the wicked, in the pride of his heart, doth persecute the poor; though they belch out with their mouth, and seek to double murder the innocent, by detraction and by deadly practice, yet God both hears and jeers at their madness, and will bring all their purposes to nought with little ado; nay, the very cruelty of his enemies will move God to make haste. The saints fare the better for the insolence and outrages of their enemies, whose ruin is thereby accelerated; and somewhat God will do the sooner for his people, lest the enemy exalt himself. Ps. cxl. 8.—*Abraham Wright.*

Verse 8 (*last clause*).—In the close of the verse, mention is made of *all nations*, to intimate. that though they might equal the whole world in numbers, they would prove a mere mockery with all their influence and resources. Or the words may be read—Even as *thou hast all the nations in derision.* One thing is obvious, that David ridicules the vain boasting of his enemies, who thought no undertaking too great to be accomplished by their numbers.—*John Calvin.*

Verses 8, 9:—

8 But thou, Lord, laughest at them;
Thou deridest all the heathen.
9 His strength! Toward thee will I keep watch,
For God is my high-fort.

William Kay

Verse 9.—"*Because of his strength will I wait upon thee.*" Those seem to come nearest the meaning of the psalmist, who construe the words as one continuous sentence, "*I will put in trust his strength with thee*," meaning that however intemperately Saul might boast of his strength, he would rest satisfied in the assurance that there was a secret divine providence restraining his actions. We must learn to view all men as subordinated in this manner, and to conceive of their strength and their enterprises as depending upon the sovereign will of God. In my opinion, the following version is the best—"*His strength is with thee, I will wait.*" The words are parallel with those in the end of the Psalm, where there can be no doubt that the nominative case is employed, "*My strength is with thee*, I will sing."—*John Calvin.*

Verse 9 (*first clause*).—"*His strength*" is great, humanly viewed; but to the eye of faith what is it! LXX, *τὸ κράτος μοι* (=*uzzi*); and so most ancient versions. (The contrast is given in verses 16, 17.)—*William Kay.*

Verse 9.—"*Will I wait upon thee*," *lit.*, "I will *keep watch* to thee," alluding to the title. "When Saul sent, and they *watched* the house *to kill* him." David sets *watching before God*, against their *watching to kill* him.—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 9.—How weak soever the believer finds himself, and how powerful soever he perceives his enemy to be, it is all one to him, he hath no more to do but to put faith on work, and to wait till God works. "*Because of his* (that is, the enemy's) *strength, I will wait upon thee*," saith he to the Lord, "*for God is my defence.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verse 10.—"*The God of my mercy shall prevent me.*" Oh, how the saints sing of the love of Christ! Oh, how they sing that this love was not moved by worthiness, and it disdains all hire and price, but loves us because he loves us! Deut. vii. 8. O sing of his wonderful love, and of the *prevention* of this love of Christ: "*The God of my mercy shall prevent me.*" How, 1. It preventeth thy love to him. 1 John iv. 19. "We love God, because he first loved us." 2. It preventeth our sins, as in Paul's case. Acts ix. 3: "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven." 3. It preventeth our calamities. Psalm lxxix. 8: "Let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us." And, 4. It prevents our endeavours. "*The God of my mercy shall prevent me.*"—*John Spalding, in "Synaxis Sacra,"* 1703.

Verse 10 (*first clause*).—The psalmist was sure of mercy upon these grounds, he knew he was safe, because God was his God, and the God of his mercy: "*The God of my mercy shall prevent me.*" Some read it, *hath prevented me*; others, *doth prevent me*; and others, as in my text, *shall prevent me.* Each of these senses is exceedingly sweet and full. Take it in the first sense, *hath prevented me*, and it implies thus much, that the psalmist never was in any difficulty, temptation, or fear, but God was beforehand with him; having always the mercy ready which he stood in need of; and had given it in due season, and that when he least expected it, and it may be was least prepared for it. Take it in the second sense, *doth prevent*, it argues the psalmist's ground of confidence when all present appearances were gone; as if he had said, "God is of one mind, his thoughts are thoughts of peace, and not of evil; he may vary his providence, but his heart is the same as ever; why should I fear, why should I not hope and rejoice? for my God is a tried God, he is working for me even now. He prevents my fears, and he will prevent my falling." Take the words as they lie in my text, and it comes to the same thing. "God sees all my enemies' designs, and he is ready for them; my prayer is heard, and sure I am deliverance will come, though I know not the time of it."

My design, under the Spirit's influence, is to look into my own heart and yours, and show you what wonders of providence and grace God, as *the God of our mercy*, has caused to pass before us. In discoursing on these words, I shall enquire, I. In what sense, or in what respects, God is *the God of our mercy.* II. How, as the God of our mercy, he doth prevent us. III. Apply.

I. I am to enquire in what respects God is said to be *the God of his people's mercy*, and it seems to include in it these three things. 1. That all the mercy which is in God's nature, is for his saints. It is a great word that (1 Peter v. 10), "*the God of all grace.*" God has in him all sorts of grace for his saints. He hath pardoning, quickening, strengthening, comforting, and preserving grace. His mercy is rich mercy, abundant mercy, inexhaustible mercy, sure mercy. A man's riches are his glory; God glories in his mercy; it is his delight, he rests in it; and so may we, because there is an infinite inconceivable fulness of it in *him.* "With thee is the fountain of life." God distributes and parcels out this mercy, that we may conceive of it the better; hence he is called by the apostle, "*The Father of mercies*, and the *God of all comfort.*" 2 Cor. i. 3. God is not called the author of our mercies, but the *Father* of them; to show how freely they come from him; they are his bowels; he is pleased with them, as the father is with his own child; dwell on the name, it is a sweet one, the *Father of mercies.* In my text, David grasps all this mercy, lays hold of it as his own mercy: "*The God of my mercy* shall prevent me." That is one sense. 2. It supposes, farther, that there is a portion of mercy laid by, in the purpose of God, for every saint; a portion of mercy which he may call *his own.* This some understand to be Christ's meaning to Paul (2 Cor. xii. 9): "My grace is sufficient for thee;" *i.e.*, that grace which I have allotted for thee thou wilt find sufficient. I knew what thou wouldst need in my eternal counsels; I have made provision beforehand; I have taken care thou shouldst have enough. 3. The words suppose, farther, that God has taken it upon him as his charge, to keep this portion of his mercy for his people. Whatever it be, soul, it is in trust for thee with him, Every saint may apply to God, as the God of every mercy which he needs.—*Condensed from John Hill's Sermon.*

Verse 10.—"*God shall let me see* my desire *upon mine enemies.*" The words "*my desire*," are not in the original, and would be better omitted. The sense is—God will enable me to look down calmly upon my enemies. So Christ looked upon his murderers. So Stephen was enabled to do when they "gnashed upon him with their teeth." "All that sat in the council looking steadfastly upon him, saw his face as it had been the face of angel." Acts vi. 15.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 11.—"*Slay them not*," that they may be a whetstone to others' faith—as the Spartans (mentioned in Plutarch's Apothegms) refused to allow the destruction of a neighbouring city which had often called forth their armies, saying, "Destroy not the whetstone of our young men."—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 11.—"*Slay them not:*"—

"Live loathed and long
You smiling, smooth, detested parasites."

W. Shakspeare.

Verse 11.—The enemies must serve for monuments of the divine righteousness, not less in the abiding wretchedness of their race than by their own sudden destruction. Parallel to this verse, and to verses 6, 14, is the curse which David utters upon Joab, in 2 Sam. iii. 29: "Let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that *lacketh bread*;" then the threatening of the man of God to Eli, in 1 Sam. ii. 36, where, after announcing the violent death of the evildoers themselves, corresponding to verse 13 here, it is said: "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him [the new high priest] for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread." Christian expositors have all along drawn attention to the fact, that the substance of our verse, as that also of verses 6, 14, has gone into fulfilment on the Jews. "They have been scattered into all lands, and must go and stand before the eyes of all Christians as

a living witness, that they have crucified the true Messiah and Saviour of the world. So that if you see a Jew, think on this word." (*Arnd.*)—*E. W Hengstenberg.*

Verse 11.—"*Slay them not;*" namely, suddenly. "*Scatter them.*" It should seem that he hath a relation to Cain's punishment, whom God would not have killed, but would have him to be a wanderer all the days of his life for a spectacle, and an example of his judgments. Gen. iv. 12. Others translate it, *shake them;* namely, their degree of honour and glory.—*John Diodati*, 1576—1649.

Verse 12.—"*For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips,*" etc. Albeit the persecutors do not accomplish their purpose against the righteous; yet their pride, their brags, their lies, their slanders, their curses against the godly, are a sufficient ditty for damnation and wrath to come upon them.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 12.—"*The words of their lips.*" The phrase, *word of the lips*, is often used for empty loquacity and boasting; the opposite of a word that is solid and founded on fact, as in 2 Kings xviii. 20. "Thou speakest, but it is only a *word of the lips.*" Prov. xiv. 23. "In all labour there is profit: but the *word of the lips* tendeth only to penury."—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 13.—"*Consume them,*" emphatically, "*consume them in wrath, that they may not be;*" which at first sight seems contrary to his first desire, "*Slay them not;*" but it is not so, for he speaks not of their life, as if he would have them so consumed, that they should not remain alive; but he desires only a consumption of their power, royalty, command, etc. And so these words are a farther explication of his second desire, "*Bring them down.*" He would have them so brought down and consumed in their strength, dignity, command, wealth, riches, that made them proud, that they never be able any more to oppose God, hurt his people, trample upon religion and his church; he would have them live.—*William Nicholson.*

Verse 13.—"*Consume them.*" I hear of sad doings in Poland, of villages burnt down, of peaceable men deported to Siberia by hundreds, of women flogged; and when I look away to that Warsaw market-place where a woman, nearly naked, is being publicly beaten, and when I see cruel Mouravieff smile as the blood jets forth from the scourged shoulders, I will not deny that I feel very much tempted to say, "Happy man, whose bullet in fair fight should empty that saddle!" Am I bloodthirsty in this? Am I vindictive? Do you condemn me for this feeling?—*R. A. Bertram.*

Verse 13.—"*That they may not be.*" By the word, וְאֵינֵמוֹ, *that they may not be*, may be understood either a vile and wretched state in general, or even total destruction. The *former* must indeed here be admitted, as is plain from the context, yet not to the exclusion of the *latter* sense; since a miserable condition, such as in a disease, issues in destruction at length. *Not to be* is evidently by no means rarely taken for to be *nobody*, to be wretched, afflicted, despised. Comp. Jer. xxxi. 15.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 13.—"*Selah.*" Though God be in all his words *Yea* and *Amen*, yet in setting this seal of "*Selah*" to this doctrine, he hath testified his will that he would have all these things the better understood and the deeplier imprinted; that if the wicked go on to persecute the godly, "*Selah,*" assuredly God will have them in derision; "*Selah,*" assuredly God shall shiver their bones, shake their best actions, and discover their impurity; "*Selah,*" assuredly God's hand shall be heavy upon them, and they shall not discern it to be his hand till they are consumed. "*Selah,*" assuredly, verily, amen, this is a faithful, an infallible truth; as the Lord liveth it shall be so.—*Abraham Wright.*

Verse 14.—"*Dog.*" Is it the influence of Christianity extending its law of kindness to the lower animals, or something in the nature of northern dogs and

northern men, which makes dogs among us Anglo-Saxons, and all the associations connected with them, so entirely different from what they are in the East? Imagine the effigy of an Oriental saint reposing with its feet on a dog, like that of William the Silent, the heroic Prince of Orange, on the faithful spaniel which rescued his life in the night attack of the Spanish troops, and like so many a sculptured knight of mediæval times! The very presence of such an image would, in Oriental eyes, be the greatest desecration an enemy could inflict on a sacred edifice. And in the Bible how exceedingly contemptuous, and how inapplicable to English dogs, are the terms employed in describing canine habits. "*They grin like a dog, and go about the city, and grudge if they be not satisfied;*" "*Without are dogs.*" What possible resemblance is there between such a description and the grave dignity of a Newfoundland; the sagacious, acute expression of a terrier; the wistful, almost human eyes of our house spaniels? But here at Tyre, as in most Eastern towns, the familiar words came to us with all their true and forcible meaning. The wolfish, hungry, masterless dogs which "go about the cities (of Alexandria, for instance), gathering in packs like jackals, prowling about for offal, and grudging if they be not satisfied;" or the famished outcasts, like our dogs at Tyre, prowling "outside" the city. To these we may apply the highly unfavourable definitions of Scripture, which every Englishman and Englishwoman must indignantly disclaim on behalf of the loyal, faithful, patient creatures who watch beside our homes like sentinels, and guard our flocks like shepherds, and welcome us with ecstatic joy when we come home again, and sometimes will even die rather than desert a master's grave.—*From "Wanderings over Bible Lands and Seas."* 1862.

Verse 14.—Those that repent of their sins when they are in trouble, *mourn like doves;* those whose hearts are hardened when they are in trouble, *make a noise like dogs.—Matthew Henry.*

Verse 15.—"*Let them wander up and down,*" etc. A beggarly and indigent, and so an unsatisfied and wearisome condition, shall be their lot; the greatest worldly plague that can fall on any—large appetites and no possessions or acquests to satisfy them.—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 15.—"*And grudge if they be not satisfied.*" A contented man, if he has not what he would have, yet doth not grudge, doth not quarrel with providence, nor fret within himself; but those whose God is their belly, if that be not filled and its appetites gratified, fall out both with God and themselves. It is not poverty, but discontent that makes a man unhappy.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 15.—The hunger of a dog is deservedly their plague, of whom a resemblance of that unclean animal's disposition hath been the sin. Reader, be it thy care to avoid such sins, and cultivate a spirit of lively devotion; that, instead of receiving thy portion where there is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, thou mayst sing to the God of thy mercy for ever.—*Benjamin Boothroyd.*

Verse 16.—We must not pass by the contrast with the wretched condition of the wicked, which is indicated by the pronouns הֵמָּה, *they*, in verse fifteen, and וַאֲנִי *but I*, which are in exact antithesis; also the "*evening*," mentioned above, and the "*morning*," now occurring, for the times of trouble and happiness, and the *dog-like noise* of the wicked, and the *singing* with joyful sound of David, to pass by other particulars, likewise give to the diverse states additional difference.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 16.—*Cantabo* and *exaltabo*, "*I will sing*," and "*I will sing aloud.*" Here is *singing* only of God's *power;* but there is *singing aloud* of his *mercy;* as if his *mercy* were more exaltable than his power, and *that* reached the very *heavens; this* unto the *clouds.* Ps. xxxvi. 5.—*From Humphrey Sydenham's Sermon, entitled "The Wel-toned Cymball,"* 1637.

Verse 17.—"*Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing.*"—Formerly he had said that the strength of his enemy was with God, and now he asserts the same thing of his own. The expression, however, which admits of two meanings, he elegantly applies to himself in a different sense. God has the strength of the wicked in

his hands, to curb and to restrain it, and to show that any power of which they boast is vain and fallacious. His own people, on the other hand, he supports and secures against the possibility of falling, by supplies of strength from himself.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 17.—"*Unto thee, O my strength.*" In opposition to *the enemy's* "*strength*," ver. 9. "*Thy* power," or "*strength*"—the Hebrew word is the same (*ver.* 16)—is "*my* strength." There is an elegant play on similar sounds in the Hebrew for "I will *wait* upon thee," אֶשְׁמְרָה (ver. 9), and "I will sing,"—אֲזַמְּרָה.—*A. R. Faussett.*

Verse 17 (*first clause*).—As on account of *Saul's strength* my *watching* was directed to thee; so now, on account of *thy strength* vouchsafed to me, my *singing* of praises also shall be directed to thee alone.—*Martin Geier.*

Verse 17.—"*Strength*"—"*Mercy.*" He joins these two attributes, "*strength*" and "*mercy*," very well; for take away *strength* from him, and he cannot; remove mercy, and he will not, protect: both must go together in any one that will defend: *power*, that he can, *mercy*, that he will; otherwise 'tis but in vain to hope for help from him. David found God to be both, and for both he extols him.—*William Nicholson.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1 (*first clause*).—Deliver me from temptation, uphold me in temptation, cleanse me from the result of temptation. The world, the flesh, the devil, and chiefly sin, these are our enemies. We cannot escape them of ourselves, but the Lord by providence and grace can rescue us.

Verse 2 (*first clause*).—From being tempted by their promises, cowed by their threats, corrupted by their teaching, influenced by their example, injured by their slander, hindered in usefulness by their opposition.

Verse 3 (*first clause*).—The subtleties of Satan. Watches for places, times, states, and ways in which to assail us. Errors in doctrine, practice, spirit, set forth to entrap us. "Ye are not ignorant of his devices." Or, the diabolical ambush, discovered by watchfulness, and defeated by faith.

Verse 4.—The activity of the evil a rebuke for the good. I. Their activity, "run." II. Unanimity—"*they* run." III. Their care—"prepare themselves." IV. Their readiness—"without my fault."

Verse 5.—"*O Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel.*" This title furnishes an admirable topic.

Verse 9.—The greatness of difficulty a reason for prayer and faith.

Verse 10 (*first clause*).—The divine forwardness to bless.

Verse 11.—The continuance of our enemies a salutary ordinance of God for the prevention of an evil to which we are very liable.

Verse 13 (*last clause*).—God as the God of the church, his government as such, known in all human history.

Verse 16.—The heavenly chorister. I. His song is sweet in contrast with the revilings of others—"but I." II. It treats of subjects which terrify others—"thy power." III. It grows louder on tender themes—"thy mercy." IV. It has its choice seasons—"in the morning." V. It is tuned by experience—"for thou hast." VI. It is all to God's glory—"*thy* power," "*thy* mercy," "*thou* hast."

Verse 17.—I. *A doctrine*—God is his people's strength. II. *An appropriation*—"my strength." III. *A resolution.* The song of gratitude for the past, faith for the present, hope for the future, of bliss for eternity.

WORK UPON THE FIFTY-NINTH PSALM.

In CHANDLER'S "*Life of David*," Vol. I., pp. 85—89, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.

PSALM LX.

TITLE.—*Here is a lengthy title, but it helps us much to expound the Psalm.* To the Chief Musician upon Shushan-eduth, *or the Lily of Testimony. The forty-fifth was on the lilies, and represented the kingly warrior in his beauty going forth to war; here we see him dividing the spoil and bearing testimony to the glory of God. Tunes have strange names apparently, but this results from the fact that we do not know what was in the composer's mind, else they might seem to be touchingly appropriate; perhaps the music or the musical instruments have more to do with this title than the Psalm itself. Yet in war-songs roses and lilies are often mentioned, and one remembers Macaulay's Song of the Huguenots, though perhaps we err in mentioning so carnal a verse—*

> *"Now by the lips of those ye love, fair gentlemen of France,*
> *Charge for the golden lilies now, upon them with the lance."*

Michtam of David, to teach. *David obeyed the precept to teach the children of Israel; he recorded the Lord's mighty acts that they might be rehearsed in the ears of generations to come. Golden secrets are to be told on the house-tops; these things were not done in a corner and ought not to be buried in silence. We ought gladly to learn what inspiration so beautifully teaches.* When he strove with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah. *The combined Aramean tribes sought to overcome Israel, but were signally defeated.* When Joab returned. *He had been engaged in another region, and the enemies of Israel took advantage of his absence, but on his return with Abishai the fortunes of war were changed.* And smote of Edom in the valley of salt twelve thousand. *More than this appear to have fallen according to* 1 Chron. xviii. 12, *but this commemorates one memorable part of the conflict. Terrible must have been the battle, but decisive indeed were the results, and the power of the enemy was utterly broken. Well did the Lord deserve a song from his servant.*

DIVISIONS.—*Properly the song may be said to consist of three parts: the complaining verses,* 1—3; *the gladsome,* 4—8; *the prayerful,* 9—12. *We have divided it as the sense appeared to change.*

EXPOSITION

O GOD, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again.

2 Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it: heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh.

3 Thou hast showed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.

1. Before the days of Saul, Israel had been brought very low; during his government it had suffered from internal strife, and his reign was closed by an overwhelming disaster at Gilboa. David found himself the possessor of a tottering throne, troubled with the double evil of faction at home, and invasion from abroad. He traced at once the evil to its true source, and began at the fountainhead. His were the politics of piety, which after all are the wisest and most profound. He knew that the displeasure of the Lord had brought calamity upon the nation, and to the removal of that displeasure he set himself by earnest prayer. "*O God, thou hast cast us off.*" Thou hast treated us as foul and offensive things, to be put away; as mean and beggarly persons, to be shunned with contempt; as useless dead boughs, to be torn away from the

tree which they disfigure. To be cast off by God is the worst calamity that can befal a man or a people; but the worst form of it is when the person is not aware of it and is indifferent to it. When the divine desertion causes mourning and repentance, it will be but partial and temporary. When a cast-off soul sighs for its God it is not indeed cast off at all. "*Thou hast scattered us.*" David clearly sees the fruits of the divine anger, he traces the flight of Israel's warriors, the breaking of her power, the division in her body politic, to the hand of God. Whoever might be the secondary agent of these disasters, he beholds the Lord's hand as the prime moving cause, and pleads with the Lord concerning the matter. Israel was like a city with a breach made in its wall, because her God was wroth with her. These first two verses, with their depressing confession, must be regarded as greatly enhancing the power of the faith which in the after verses rejoices in better days, through the Lord's gracious return unto his people. "*Thou hast been displeased.*" This is the secret of our miseries. Had we pleased thee, thou wouldst have pleased us; but as we have walked contrary to thee, thou hast walked contrary to us. "*O turn thyself to us again.*" Forgive the sin and smile once more. Turn us to thee, turn thou to us. Aforetime thy face was towards thy people, be pleased to look on us again with thy favour and grace. Some read it, "Thou wilt turn to us again," and it makes but slight difference which way we take it, for a true-hearted prayer brings a blessing so soon that it is no presumption to consider it as already obtained. There was more need for God to turn to his people than for Judah's troops to be brave, or Joab and the commanders wise. God with us is better than strong battalions; God displeased is more terrible than all the Edomites that ever marched into the valley of salt, or all the devils that ever opposed the church. If the Lord turn to us, what care we for Aram-naharaim or Aram-zobah, or death, or hell? but if he withdraw his presence we tremble at the fall of a leaf.

2. "*Thou hast made the earth to tremble.*" Things were as unsettled as though the solid earth had been made to quake; nothing was stable; the priests had been murdered by Saul, the worst men had been put in office, the military power had been broken by the Philistines, and the civil authority had grown despicable through insurrections and intestine contests. "*Thou hast broken it.*" As the earth cracks, and opens itself in rifts during violent earthquakes, so was the kingdom rent with strife and calamity. "*Heal the breaches thereof.*" As a house in time of earthquake is shaken, and the walls begin to crack, and gape with threatening fissures, so was it with the kingdom. "*For it shaketh.*" It tottered to a fall; if not soon propped up and repaired it would come down in complete ruin. So far gone was Israel, that only God's interposition could preserve it from utter destruction. How often have we seen churches in this condition, and how suitable is the prayer before us, in which the extremity of the need is used as an argument for help. The like may be said of our own personal religion, it is sometimes so tried, that like a house shaken by earthquake it is ready to come down with a crash, and none but the Lord himself can repair its breaches, and save us from utter destruction.

3. "*Thou hast showed thy people hard things.*" Hardships had been heaped upon them, and the psalmist traces these rigorous providences to their fountain-head. Nothing had happened by chance, but all had come by divine design and with a purpose, yet for all that things had gone hard with Israel. The psalmist claims that they were still the Lord's own people, though in the first verse he had said, "thou hast cast us off." The language of complaint is usually confused, and faith in time of trouble ere long contradicts the desponding statements of the flesh. "*Thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.*" Our afflictions have made us like men drunken with some potent and bitter wine; we are in amazement, confusion, delirium; our steps reel, and we stagger as those about to fall. The great physician gives his patients potent potions to purge out their abounding and deep-seated diseases. Astonishing evils bring with them astonishing results. The grapes of the vineyard of sin

produce a wine which fills the most hardened with anguish when justice compels them to quaff the cup. There is a fire-water of anguish of soul which even to the righteous makes a cup of trembling, which causes them to be exceeding sorrowful almost unto death. When grief becomes so habitual as to be our drink, and to take the place of our joys, becoming our only wine, then are we in an evil case indeed.

4 Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.

5 That thy beloved may be delivered; save *with* thy right hand, and hear me.

4. Here the strain takes a turn. The Lord has called back to himself his servants, and commissioned them for his service, presenting them with a standard to be used in his wars. "*Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee.*" Their afflictions had led them to exhibit holy fear, and then being fitted for the Lord's favour, he gave them an ensign, which would be both a rallying point for their hosts, a proof that he had sent them to fight, and a guarantee of victory. The bravest men are usually intrusted with the banner, and it is certain that those who fear God most have less fear of man than any others. The Lord has given us the standard of the gospel, let us live to uphold it, and if needful die to defend it. Our right to contend for God, and our reason for expecting success, are found in the fact that the faith has been once committed to the saints, and that by the Lord himself. "*That it may be displayed because of the truth.*" Banners are for the breeze, the sun, the battle. Israel might well come forth boldly, for a sacred standard was borne aloft before them. To publish the gospel is a sacred duty, to be ashamed of it a deadly sin. The truth of God was involved in the triumph of David's armies, he had promised them victory; and so in the proclamation of the gospel we need feel no hesitancy, for as surely as God is true he will give success to his own word. For the truth's sake, and because the true God is on our side, let us in these modern days of warfare emulate the warriors of Israel, and unfurl our banners to the breeze with confident joy. Dark signs of present or coming ill must not dishearten us; if the Lord had meant to destroy us he would not have given us the gospel; the very fact that he has revealed himself in Christ Jesus involves the certainty of victory. *Magna est veritas et prævalebit.*

Hard things thou hast upon us laid,
And made us drink most bitter wine;
But still thy banner we've display'd,
And borne aloft thy truth divine.

Our courage fails not, though the night
No earthly lamp avails to break,
For thou wilt soon arise in might,
And of our captors captives make.

"*Selah.*" There is so much in the fact of a banner being given to the hosts of Israel, so much of hope, of duty, of comfort, that a pause is fitly introduced. The sense justifies it, and the more joyful strain of the music necessitates it.

5. "*That thy beloved may be delivered.*" David was the Lord's beloved, his name signifies "dear, or beloved," and there was in Israel a remnant according to the election of grace, who were the beloved of the Lord; for their sakes the Lord wrought great marvels, and he had an eye to them in all his mighty acts. God's beloved are the inner seed, for whose sake he preserves the entire nation, which acts as a husk to the vital part. This is the main design of providence, "*That thy beloved may be delivered;*" if it were not for their sakes he would neither give a banner nor send victory to it. "*Save with thy right hand, and hear me.*" Save at once, before the prayer is over; the case is desperate unless

there be immediate salvation. Tarry not, O Lord, till I have done pleading: save first and hear afterwards. The salvation must be a right royal and eminent one, such as only the omnipotent hand of God linked with his dexterous wisdom can achieve. Urgent distress puts men upon pressing and bold petitions such as this. We may by faith ask for and expect that our extremity will be God's opportunity: special and memorable deliverances will be wrought out when dire calamities appear to be imminent. Here is one suppliant for many, even as in the case of our Lord's intercession for his saints. He, the Lord's David, pleads for the rest of the beloved, beloved and accepted in him the Chie Beloved; he seeks salvation as though it were for himself, but his eye is ever upon all those who are one with him in the Father's love. When divine interposition is necessary for the rescue of the elect it must occur, for the first and greatest necessity of providence is the honour of God, and the salvation of his chosen. This is fixed fate, the centre of the immutable decree, the inmost thought of the unchangeable Jehovah.

6 God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.

7 Gilead *is* mine, and Manasseh *is* mine; Ephraim also *is* the strength of mine head; Judah *is* my lawgiver;

8 Moab *is* my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me.

6. "*God hath spoken in his holiness.*" Faith is never happier than when it can fall back upon the promise of God. She sets this over against all discouraging circumstances; let outward providences say what they will, the voice of a faithful God drowns every sound of fear. God had promised Israel victory, and David the kingdom: the holiness of God secured the fulfilment of his own covenant, and therefore the king spake confidently. The goodly land had been secured to the tribes by the promise made to Abraham, and that divine grant was an abundantly sufficient warrant for the belief that Israel's arms would be successful in battle. Believer make good use of this, and banish doubts while promises remain. "*I will rejoice,*" or "I will triumph." Faith regards the promise not as fiction but fact, and therefore drinks in joy from it, and grasps victory by it. "God hath spoken; I will rejoice;" here is a fit motto for every soldier of the cross. "*I will divide Shechem.*" As a victor David would allot the conquered territory to those to whom God had given it by lot. Shechem was an important portion of the country which as yet had not yielded to his government; but he saw that by Jehovah's help it would be, and indeed was all his own. Faith divides the spoil, she is sure of what God has promised, and enters at once into possession. "*And mete out the valley of Succoth.*" As the east so the west of Jordan should be allotted to the proper persons. Enemies should be expelled, and the landmarks of peaceful ownership set up. Where Jacob had pitched his tent, there his rightful heirs should till the soil. When God has spoken, his divine *shall*, our "*I will*," becomes no idle boast, but the fit echo of the Lord's decree. Believer, up and take possession of covenant mercies, "*Divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.*" Let not Canaanitish doubts and legalisms keep thee out of the inheritance of grace. Live up to thy privileges, take the good which God provides thee.

7. "*Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine.*" He claims the whole land on account of the promise. Two other great divisions of the country he mentions, evidently delighting to survey the goodly land which the Lord had given him. All things are ours, whether things present or things to come; no mean portion belongs to the believer, and let him not think meanly of it. No enemy shall withhold from true faith what God has given her, for grace makes her mighty to wrest it from the foe. Life is mine, death is mine, for Christ is mine. "*Ephraim also is the strength of mine head.*" All the military power of the

valiant tribe was at the command of David, and he praises God for it. God will bow to the accomplishment of his purposes all the valour of men: the church may cry, "the prowess of armies is mine," God will overrule all their achievements for the progress of his cause. "*Judah is my lawgiver.*" There the civil power was concentrated: the king being of that tribe sent forth his laws out of her midst. We know no lawgiver, but the King who came out of Judah. To all the claims of Rome, or Oxford, or the councils of men, we pay no attention; we are free from all other ecclesiastical rule, but that of Christ; but we yield joyful obedience to him: "*Judah is my lawgiver.*" Amid distractions it is a great thing to have good and sound legislation, it was a balm for Israel's wounds, it is our joy in the church of Christ.

8. Having looked at home with satisfaction, the hero-king now looks abroad with exultation. "*Moab,*" so injurious to me in former years, "*is my washpot.*" The basin into which the water falls when it is poured from an ewer upon my feet. A mere pot to hold the dirty water after my feet have been washed in it. Once she defiled Israel, according to the counsel of Balaam, the son of Beor; but she shall be no longer able to perpetrate such baseness; she shall be a washpot for those whom she sought to pollute. The wicked as we see in them the evil, the fruit, and the punishment of sin, shall help on the purification of the saints. This is contrary to their will, and to the nature of things, but faith finds honey in the lion, and a washpot in filthy Moab. David treats his foes as but insignificant and inconsiderable; a whole nation he counts but as a footbath for his kingdom. "*Over Edom will I cast out my shoe.*" As a man when bathing throws his shoes on one side, so would he obtain his dominion over haughty Esau's descendants as easily as a man casts a shoe. Perhaps he would throw his shoe as nowadays men throw their glove, as a challenge to them to dare dispute his sway. He did not need draw a sword to smite his now crippled and utterly despondent adversary, for if he dared revolt he would only need to throw his slipper at him, and he would tremble. Easily are we victors when Omnipotence leads the way. The day shall come when the church shall with equal ease subdue China and Ethiopia to the sceptre of the Son of David. Every believer also may by faith triumph over all difficulties, and reign with him who hath made us kings and priests. "They overcame through the blood of the Lamb," shall yet be said of all who rest in the power of Jesus. "*Philistia, triumph thou because of me.*" Be so subdued as to rejoice in my victories over my other foes. Or does he mean, I who smote thy champion have at length so subdued thee that thou shalt never be able to rejoice over Israel again; but if thou must needs triumph it must be with me, and not against me; or rather is it a taunting defiance, a piece of irony? O proud Philistia, where are thy vaunts? Where now thy haughty looks, and promised conquests? Thus dare we defy the last enemy, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" So utterly hopeless is the cause of hell when the Lord comes forth to the battle, that even the weakest daughter of Zion may shake her head at the enemy, and laugh him to scorn. O the glorying of faith! There is not a grain of vain glory in it, but yet her holy boastings none can hinder. When the Lord speaks the promise, we will not be slow to rejoice and glory in it.

9 Who will bring me *into* the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?

10 *Wilt* not thou, O God, *which* hadst cast us off? and *thou*, O God, *which* didst not go out with our armies?

9. As yet the interior fortresses of Edom had not been subdued. Their invading bands had been slain in the valley of salt, and David intended to push his conquests even to Petra the city of the rock, deemed to be impregnable. "*Who will bring me into the strong city?*" It was all but inaccessible, and hence the question of David. When we have achieved great success it must

be a stimulus to greater efforts, but it must not become a reason for self-confidence. We must look to the strong for strength as much at the close of a campaign as at its beginning. "*Who will lead me into Edom?*" High up among the stars stood the city of stone, but God could lead his servant up to it. No heights of grace are too elevated for us, the Lord being our leader, but we must beware of high things attempted in self-reliance. Excelsior is well enough as a cry, but we must look to the highest of all for guidance. Joab could not bring David into Edom. The veterans of the valley of salt could not force the passage, yet was it to be attempted, and David looked to the Lord for help. Heathen nations are yet to be subdued. The city of the seven hills must yet hear the gospel. Who will give the church the power to accomplish this? The answer is not far to seek.

10. "*Wilt not thou, O God, which hadst cast us off?*" Yes, the chastising God is our only hope. He loves us still. For a small moment does he forsake, but with great mercy does he gather his people. Strong to smite, he is also strong to save. He who proved to us our need of him by showing us what poor creatures we are without him, will now reveal the glory of his help by conducting great enterprises to a noble issue. "*And thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies?*" The self-same God art thou, and to thee faith cleaves. Though thou slay us, we will trust in thee, and look for thy merciful help.

11 Give us help from trouble: for vain *is* the help of man.
12 Through God we shall do valiantly: for he *it is that* shall tread down our enemies.

11. "*Give us help from trouble.*" Help us to overcome the disasters of civil strife and foreign invasion; save us from further incursions from without and division within. Do thou, O Lord, work this deliverance, "*for vain is the help of man.*" We have painfully learned the utter impotence of armies, kings, and nations without thine help. Our banners trailed in the mire have proven our weakness without thee, but yonder standard borne aloft before us shall witness to our valour now that thou hast come to our rescue. How sweetly will this verse suit the tried people of God as a frequent ejaculation. We know how true it is.

12. "*Through God we shall do valiantly.*" From God all power proceeds, and all we do well is done by divine operation; but still we, as soldiers of the great king, are to fight, and to fight valiantly too. Divine working is not an argument for human inaction, but rather is it the best excitement for courageous effort. Helped in the past, we shall also be helped in the future, and being assured of this we resolve to play the man. "*For he it is that shall tread down our enemies.*" From him shall the might proceed, to him shall the honour be given. Like straw on the thrashing-floor beneath the feet of the oxen shall we tread upon our abject foes, but it shall rather be *his* foot which presses them down than ours; his hand shall go out against them so as to put them down and keep them in subjection. In the case of Christians there is much encouragement for a resolve similar to that of the first clause. "*We shall do valiantly.*" we will not be ashamed of our colours, afraid of our foes, or fearful of our cause. The Lord is with us, omnipotence sustains us, and we will not hesitate, we dare not be cowards. O that our King, the true David, were come to claim the earth, for the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the nations.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—There are some difficulties attendant upon the title of this Psalm, when it is compared with the contents. We naturally expect after such an inscription, joy, congratulation, and praise for victory; but the psalmist breaks out into lamentations and bitter complaints: his strains are, however, changed, when he has proceeded as far as verse three, where he begins to feel confidence, and to employ the language of exultation and triumph. The best means of removing this discrepancy seems to be by remarking, that this Psalm was written after some of the battles of which mention is made in the title, but that the author does not restrict himself to those events without taking a wider range, so as to embrace the afflictive condition both of Israel and Judah during the latter part of Saul's life, and the former years of David's reign. In the concluding years of Saul, the Philistines obtained a superiority over him, and finally destroyed him with his army. Subsequently to these events the whole land was in a very disturbed and agitated condition, arising out of the contentions between the partisans of Saul's family, and those who were attached to David. The nations which inhabited the regions adjacent to the land of Canaan were at all times inimical to the Jews, and seized every opportunity of attacking and injuring them. But when David had succeeded in uniting the whole nation under his authority, he proceeded to avenge the injuries and insults that had been inflicted on his countrymen by the Philistines, Edomites, Moabites, and Syrians; and God was pleased to give him signal success in his undertakings. He appears, therefore, to have combined all these transactions, and made them the subject of this Psalm.—*William Walford.*

Title.—"*Shushan-eduth.*" *The lilies of the testimony*—means, that this Psalm has for its chief subject something very lovely and cheering in the law: namely, the words of promise quoted in the beginning of verse six, according to which the land of Canaan belonged to the Israelites, upon which is thus established the confidence expressed in verses 6—8, with respect to their right of property over the land, and their possession of it. This promise, not to cite many other passages which occur in the Five Books of Moses, and even so early as the patriarchs, is contained in Genesis xlix., and Deut. xxxiii. It is evident of what value and importance this promise was, and particularly the remembrance of it at this time.—*T. C. Barth's* "*Bible Manual*," 1865.

Title.—The only other "*eduth*" or "*testimony*" in the Psalter, Psalm lxxx., makes mention by name of the tribes of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, and is a witness against those tribes for forsaking the Shepherd of Israel who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt.—*Joseph Francis Thrupp, M.A., in* "*An Introduction to the Study and Use of the Psalms*," 1860.

Title.—Aram-naharaim.—The name *Aram* corresponds to *Syria* in its widest and vaguest sense, and is joined with other names to designate particular parts of that large country. It even includes Mesopotamia, which is a term of physical rather than political geography, and denotes the space between the Tigris and Euphrates, corresponding to *Aram-Naharaim*, or *Syria of the Two Rivers*, in the verse before us. The king of this country was tributary to the king of Aram-Zobah, as appears from the account of David's second Aramean war (2 Sam. x. 16, 19).—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Title.—"*When he strove with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah.*" An insult offered to David's ambassadors by Hanun, king of the Ammonites, led to a serious war. Hanun obtained mercenaries from Syria to reinforce his army, Joab and Abishai his brother, David's generals, gave them battle. Joab, opposed to the Syrians, gained the first success, and the Ammonites, seeing their allies routed, took to flight into their town. But this defeat provoked a great coalition, embracing all the people between the Jordan and the Euphrates. David, however, fearlessly marched against them at the head of his army; he vanquished all his enemies, and made himself master of the small Aramæan

kingdoms of Damascus, Zobah, and Hamath, and subjugated the Eastern Idumæans, who met their final defeat in the Valley of Salt.—*François Lenormant and E. Chevallier, in "A Manual of the Ancient History of the East,"* 1869.

Title.—"*Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the valley of salt twelve thousand,*" compared with 2 Sam. viii. 13, "David gat him a name when he returned from smiting of the Syrians in the valley of salt, being eighteen thousand men," and 1 Chron. xviii. 12, where this very service was performed by *Abishai.* Answer. It is one thing to attribute the victory for the honour of the king that was the cause. But the mentioning of these chief generals, by whom the service was performed, is another. David, under God, must have the honour of the work, for the increase of his name, being set for the typing out of Christ, who must have all the glory of the day, whatever conquest he gets by instruments of that service here, who likewise are typed out in David's worthies, of whom Joab and Abishai were chief. By these he obtained that great victory over Hadadezer. In returning from which service Joab found his brother Abishai engaged "*in the valley of salt*" against eighteen thousand Edomites or Syrians (all one), whose valour the Almighty so looked on, as he attributes the whole slaughter to him, because first attempting it. Joab, it seems, took this in his return from the former slaughter, and fell in for the assistance of his brother Abishai (for that was their usual course: though they divided their armies, they did not divide their hearts). But if the enemies were too strong, one would help the other. 1 Chron. xix. 12. And of this eighteen thousand attributed to David and Abishai before, Joab slew twelve thousand of them; the memory of which service is here embalmed with a Psalm; first showing the extremes they were in, doubtful at first they should not get the victory. Secondly, applying it to the kingdom of Christ. Lastly, ascribing all the honour of the conquest to God; saying, through God this valiant service was done; it was he that trod down our enemies; and will do (last verse).—*William Streat, in "The Dividing of the Hoof,"* 1654.

Title.—"*The Valley of Salt.*" The ridge of Usdum exhibits more distinctly its peculiar formation; *the main body of the mountain being a solid mass of rock salt.* . . . . We could at first hardly believe our eyes, until we had several times approached the precipices, and broken off pieces to satisfy ourselves, both by the touch and taste. The salt, where thus exposed, is everywhere more or less furrowed by the rains. As we advanced, large lumps and masses broken off from above, lay like rocks along the shore, or were fallen down as *débris.* The very stones beneath our feet were wholly of salt. . . . . The position of this mountain at the south end of the sea, enables us also to acertain the place of "*The Valley of Salt*" mentioned in Scripture, where the Hebrews under David, and again under Amaziah, gained decisive victories over Edom. This valley could have been no other than the Ghôr south of the Dead Sea, adjacent to the mountain of salt; it separates indeed the ancient territories of Judah and Edom.—*Edward Robinson's "Biblical Researches in Palestine,"* 186

Title.—The historic record mentions *eighteen thousand* slain, and here but *twelve thousand.* The greater of course includes the less. The discrepancy may be explained by supposing that the title contains the numbers slain by one division of the army, or that the *twelve thousand* were slain in the battle, and the residue in the flight. Or an error may have crept into the text. Every scholar admits that there is sometimes serious difficulty in settling the numbers of the Old Testament. In this place Calvin has *two and twenty thousand,* the common version *twelve thousand,* while the original is *two ten thousand,* which taken in one way would mean *twenty thousand, i.e., two tens of thousands.* Hammond refers the numbers slain to different battles, and so avoids the difficulty.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 1.—"*O God, thou hast cast us off.*" The word here used means properly to be foul, rancid, offensive; and then, to treat anything *as if* it were

foul or rancid; to repel, to spurn, to cast away. It is strong language, meaning that God had seemed to treat them as if they were loathsome or offensive to him.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 2.—"*Heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh.*" They pray that this may be done with the utmost speed, because there was danger in delay, for the kingdom was already pressed down with a heavy calamity, and on the brink of ruin, which is signified by the word מָטָה whose origin is in a very strong and tremulous inclination to one side, properly from the application of a *lever*, and is applied to those who are leaning so far to one side that they are just on the point of falling; figuratively, therefore, it expresses a *most perilous condition*, in which one is on the edge of destruction.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 2.—"*Heal the breaches thereof.*" Even Israel is subject to "*breaches.*" So it was with the literal typical Israel, David's kingdom; so it may be with spiritual mystical Israel, the kingdom of Christ, the church of God upon earth. There are "*breaches*" from *without*, and "*breaches*" from *within*. I will invert the order. From *without*, by open *persecution*; from *within*, by intestine and home-bred *divisions*. Of both these the church of God in all ages hath had sufficient experience. Look we upon the *primitive* times, during the infancy of the church, however the *soundest* and entirest church that ever was, yet how was it *broken!* Broken, as by foreign persecutions, so by home-bred divisions. Both these ways was the church during the apostles' times broken, distressed by enemies from without who persecuted it.—*John Brinsley* (1600—1665), *in* "*The Healing of Israel's Breaches.*"

Verse 2.—"*It shaketh.*" That is, presaging nothing but *ruin* and *downfall*, unless it be speedily underpropped, and "*the breaches thereof*" made up and "*healed.*" Thus did David look upon Israel's disease, and hereupon it was that he was so deeply affected with it, so earnestly desiring the cure of it. The reference, as interpreters conceive, is to those *home-bred divisions*, those civil wars betwixt the two houses of Saul and David, after the death of Saul; then did the "*earth*," the land, that land of Israel (as the Chaldee explains it), *quake and tremble*, being *broken*, *riven* (as the word in the original signifieth): even as the earth sometimes by earthquakes is riven, and torn asunder with prodigious chasms, openings, or gapings: so was that kingdom divided in those civil commotions, the nobles and commons taking parts and siding, some with David, some with Ishbosheth.—*John Brinsley.*

Verse 3.—"*Thou hast showed thy people hard things.*" God will be sure to plough his own ground, whatsoever becometh of the waste; and to weed his own garden, though the rest of the world should be let alone to grow wild.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 3.—"*Thou hast given us to drink infatuation, or bewilderment, as men drink wine.*" So Hupfeld explains the construction, referring to Psalm lxxx. 5, "Thou hast made them feed upon weeping like bread;" 1 Kings xxii. 27, "Feed him with affliction as bread, and with affliction as water" (וּמַיִם לָחַץ); Isaiah xxx. 20. But the apposition is capable of being explained in another way, for the second noun may in fact be a predicate further defining the first: "Thou has given us wine to drink which is (not wine, but) bewilderment."—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 3.—"*The wine of astonishment.*" "*Intoxicating wine.*" Hebrew, "Wine of staggering," that is, which causeth staggering, or, in other words, intoxicating. Some render, "wine of stupor," or stupefying. Symmachus, "wine of agitation," and this sense I have adopted, which is also that of the Syriac.—*Benjamin Boothroyd.*

Verse 4.—"*Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee.*" Perhaps the delivery of a *banner* was anciently esteemed an obligation to protect, and that the psalmist might consider it in this light, when, upon a victory over the Syrians

and Edomites, after the public affairs of Israel had been in a bad state, he says, "*Thou hast shewed thy people hard things*," etc. "*Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee.*" Though thou didst for a time give up thine Israel into the hands of their enemies, thou hast now given them an assurance of thy having received them under thy protection.—*Thomas Harmer* (1715—1788), *in* "*Observations on Divers Passages of Scripture.*"

Verse 4.—"*Thou hast given a banner*," etc. Thou hast given us by the recent victory, after our prostrate condition, a banner of triumph to *lift up* (so the Hebrew), because of thy faithfulness to thy promise. "*The truth*" here answers to God's "*holiness*" (ver. 6). So long as soldiers see their banner *up-lifted*, they flock round it with confidence. But when it is prostrate their spirits and hopes fall. The "*banner*" is a pledge of safety, and a rallying point to those who fight under it.—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 4.—"*Thou hast given a banner*," etc. The psalmist compares the *salvation* which the Lord bestows upon his people to a highly excellent "*banner*," which serves as a signal, to one lying prostrate in his misery, to rise up. with an allusion perhaps to Numbers xxi. 8. "And the Lord said to Moses, Make thee a serpent, and set it upon a *standard-pole;* and it happened that every one who was bitten, and looked at it, lived." At any rate, that passage in which the serpent is a symbol of the healing power of God, may serve to illustrate the passage before us. Compare "*heal its breaches.*"—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 4.—"*A banner*," which is a sign or instrument:—1. Of union. This people, who were lately divided and under several banners, thou hast now gathered together and united under one banner; to wit, under my government. 2. Of battle. Thou hast given us an army and power to oppose our enemies. We had our banner to set against theirs. 3. Of triumph. We have not lost our banner but gained theirs, and brought it away in triumph. Comp. Ps. xx. 5.—*Matthew Pool.*

Verse 6.—"*God hath spoken in his holiness.*" That is, by Samuel he hath promised, as he is an holy God, and true of his word, that I should be king of all Israel, and now he hath performed it. (2 Sam. v.) Yet Calvin speaks of it as not yet performed; but the course of the history makes it plain that David was now king over the parts of which he here speaketh. "*I will divide Shechem.*" as subject to me, as Joshua having the land under him, divided it amongst his people: so David being king over all the parts of the land, divides to his followers such portions as belonged unto them by inheritance, from which happily some of them had been expelled in the time of Ish-bosheth his reign; or some families in the time of those wars might be utterly wasted away, and so the king having free power to dispose of their lands, might give them amongst his men, and take part to himself.—*John Mayer.*

Verse 6.—"*God hath spoken in his holiness.*" That is, he hath given out his word from heaven, the habitation of his holiness and of his glory; or, he hath spoken it certainly, there is nothing but holiness in his word (and that is the strength of words). David having received this word stands assured, that as Shechem and Succoth, Gilead and Manasseh, Ephraim and Judah would willingly submit to him and yield obedience: so, also, that Moab, Edom, and Philistia, who were his professed enemies, should be subdued to him. He expected to conquer and triumph over them, to put them to the basest offices, as his vassals, because God had decreed and spoken it in his holiness. God hath spoken the word, said he, therefore it shall be done, yea, 'tis done; and therefore David cried, *All mine, Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine, Moab and Edom are mine*, as soon a. God had spoken the word.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 6.—"*I will divide Shechem.*" It is as much as if he should say, I will not look to have my share measured out by others, but I will divide it, and measure myself, and will be the right owner and possessor thereof.—*Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 6.—"*I will divide Shechem*," etc. Of *Shechem* and the *Valley of Succoth*, or *booths*, so called from Jacob's making *booths*, and *feeding his cattle*

there. (See Genesis xxxiii. 17, 18.) By these are meant Samaria; and *David's dividing* or *meting* them out, is a phrase to express his *dominion* over them, in being part of the *regal* power to *distribute* his province into cities and regions, and place judges and magistrates over them. To these the addition of *Gilead* (which contains the whole region of *Bashan*, etc., on the *other side of Jordan*), and then the mention of *Manasseh* and *Ephraim*, are designed, as by so many parts, to denote the kingdom of Israel, or the ten tribes; and their being *his*, and "*the strength of his head*," notes him to be the *Lord* over them, and to make use of their strength in his wars, for the defending or enlarging his dominions. And then "*Judah* (מְחֹקְקִי) *is my lawgiver*;" as it refers to Jacob's prophecy of the *sceptre and lawgiver not departing from Judah*, denoting that to be the *royal* tribe; so by it is signified the *kingdom of Judah* (under which *Benjamin* is comprehended), that David is possessed of that also.—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 6.—"*Succoth*." If the preceding views are correct, we may rest in the result, that the present Sâkût represents the name and site of the ancient Succoth. . . . . We passed obliquely along the northern slope of the same broad swell, where the ground was covered only by a thick crop of thistles. On our right was a region of lower ground to which we gradually descended; full of grass, wild oats, and thistles, with an occasional thornbush. The soil was like that of an Ohio bottom. The grass, intermingled with tall daisies, and the wild oats, reached to the horses' backs; while the thistles sometimes overtopped the riders' heads. All was now dry; and in some places it was difficult to make our way through the exuberant growth. At last we came to the cause of this fertility, a fine brook winding along the bottom. We crossed it, and passed up again obliquely over another like swell, covered as before only with thistles. Here was an ancient oil vat, very large and of a single stone; it was evidently brought hither, and indicates the former growth of the olive in these parts. We struck the same stream again at its source, called 'Ain el-Beida, a large and fine fountain, surrounded with gardens of cucumbers, and watering an extensive tract. We were here on the edge of the higher portion of the Ghôr, where low ridges and swells project out from the foot of the western mountains, and form a rolling plain or plateau, which is well watered, arable, and very extensively cultivated for wheat. The tract further east, which we had now crossed, may be said to extend to the high bank of the lower Jordan valley. It is less elevated, is more generally level, though crossed by low swells between the water-courses, and has little tillage. The inhabitants of Tûbâs are divided into three hostile parties; and they carry their divisions into their agriculture in the Ghôr. One party sows at 'Ain el-Beida, where we now were; another around 'Ain Mak-hûz, more in the north; and the third at Ridghah, Sâkût, and further south. The people of Teyâsîr also sow on the south of Mâlih; the water of which is used for irrigation. The whole tract north of Wady Mâlih was said to be farmed from the government by one of the Sheikhs of the Jenâr family, who live at Jeba' and in its neighbourhood. By him it is again let to the different villages.—*Robinson's* "*Biblical Researches in Palestine*."

Verses 6, 7.—The chief and principal places where the seditious party had their residence and abode, were those which the psalmist mentioneth in the sixth and seventh verses, namely, *Shechem*, a city in the tribe of Ephraim; *Succoth*, a city in the tribe of Gad; *Gilead* and *Manasseh*, the utmost borders of the land of Canaan, beyond Jordan. These were some of the chief places, which sided with Ish-bosheth whilst he lived, as you may see, 2 Sam. ii.; and, as it seemeth, they still cleaved to the house of Saul after he was dead, not acknowledging David for their king.—*John Brinsley.*

Verse 7.—"*Gilead is mine and Manasseh is mine*." That is to say, I will possess myself of them and rule over them; not as a *conqueror* over *slaves*, but as a lord over *subjects*, as a father over children, owning and acknowledging them as *mine*. They are my inheritance, and shall be my people, my subjects.—*John Brinsley.*

Verse 7.—"*Ephraim also is the strength of mine head.*" The strong and warlike tribe of Ephraim being to the state what the helmet is to the warriors in battle; or, perhaps the allusion is to Deut. xxxiii. 17: "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the nations."—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 7.—"*Judah is* (or *shall be*) *my lawgiver*," *i.e.*, all his subjects should be brought under one *Head*, one governor, who should give them laws, according to which they should be ordered or governed, which power and authority belonged to the tribe of *Judah*, according to that prophecy of Jacob (Gen. xlix. 10), to which the psalmist here alludeth. No way, no means to bring the people unto unity, to bring them into one *body*, but by bringing them under one *head*, one *law-giver*, by whose laws they may be regulated and governed. Now in the church, and in matters of religion, this one *Head* is *Christ*, even that "Lion of the tribe of Judah," as he is called (Rev. v. 5). He is the *Law-giver* of his church, and let him so be. This will be found one, ay, and the only means to breed an holy and religious unity, and bring home straying, wandering sheep.—*John Brinsley.*

Verse 7.—No government could stand which was not resident in Judah.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 8.—"*Moab is my washpot.*" Implying that Moab should be reduced to slavery, it being the business of a slave to present the wash-hand basin to his master. With the Greeks, πλύνειν τινά, to wash down any one, was a slang term, signifying to ridicule, abuse, or beat; hence we have the word *washpot* applied to the subject of such treatment.

"You don't appear to be in your right senses, who make a washpot of me in the presence of many men." *Aristophanes.*—*Thomas S. Millington, in* "*The Testimony of the Heathen to the Truths of Holy Writ*," 1863.

Verse 8 (*second clause*).—When, keeping in view the idea of washing the feet, a person throws his shoes, which he has taken off, to any one to be taken away or to be cleaned—הַשְׁלִיךְ with לְ and also with אֶל, 1 Kings xix. 19, is "*to throw to any one*"—the individual to whom it belongs to perform such an office must be a slave of the lowest kind.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 8.—"*Over Edom will I cast out my shoe*," which notes either contempt of them, as if he had said, I look upon them as worthy only to scrape and make clean my shoes. Or secondly, conquest over them—I will walk through Edom and subdue it.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 8.—"*Over Edom will I cast out my shoe*" By extension, immission, or projection of the shoe, either upon the necks of people, or over their countries, is meant nothing else but to overcome, subdue, bring under power, possess, and subject to vileness such men and such countries. The very vulgar acceptation of the word *possession*, in the grammatical sense, importeth as much; for the etymology of *possessio* is no more but *pedum positio*. This manner of speaking hath also allusion to the positive law recorded in Deuteronomy (xxv. 6—10); for the letter of the law is, that if the kinsman would not marry the brother's widow and raise up seed unto his brother; the widow loosing his shoe, and spitting in his face, he lost the claim and interest of such possessions as belonged to the woman in right of her husband. And the house of such a man was called *domus discalceati*, that is to say, "The house of him that hath his shoe loosed." The practice also of this law we find recorded in the book of Ruth, in the case of Elimelech's land, between Boaz and the kinsman, about the widow Ruth, who had her interest by right of her husband in the said land. Moreover, the frequent use of this phrase meeting us very often in the book of God, makes this to be the meaning of the words, as clear as the day. This king elsewhere singing his trophies, saith, "They are fallen under my feet." "Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon." But the people must "not meddle with Mount Seir; for God would not give them thereof so much as a foot's breadth;" yet even

the place whereon the soles of their feet should tread, from the wilderness of Lebanon and from the river Euphrates unto the utmost sea, should be theirs. Psalm xviii. 38; Deut. i. 36.; ii. 5.—*William Loe, in "A Sermon before the King at Theobalds," entitled, "The King's Shoe, made and ordained to trample on, and to tread down enemies,"* 1623.

Verse 8.—"*Over Edom will I cast out my shoe.*" Turnus, having slain Pallas,—

"Bestrode the corpse, and pressed it with his foot."

Virgil.

Verse 8.—Of the Philistines he says, *Over Philistia it is mine to boast;* for so I would translate, and not, as is usual, *Philistia, triumph thou over me,* which does not yield a consistent meaning.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 8 (*last clause*).—Let not our adversaries triumph over our *breaches* "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy." Or, if they will, let them triumph: "*Triumph thou, O Philistia, because of me,* or, *over me.*"—*John Brinsley.*

Verses 8—10.—Moab in the East, Edom in the South, and Philistia in the West (the North is not mentioned, because the banner of David had already been victorious there).—*Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 9.—"*Who will lead me into Edom?*" The entrance to Petra is by a narrow gorge, lined by lofty precipices, formed by the channel of a rivulet. This defile is nearly two miles in length. At some places the overhanging rocks approach so near to each other that only two horsemen can proceed abreast. —*Dr. Tweedie, in "Ruined Cities of the East,"* 1859.

Verse 9.—The believer, when he promiseth to himself great things, must neither be senseless of the difficulties of opposition which he is to meet with, nor of his own inability to overcome difficulties; but being sensible of both, must look to God for assistance and furniture to overcome; for when David considered the strength of the fenced royal cities of the enemy, he saith, "*Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom? Wilt not thou, O God?*"—*David Dickson.*

Verse 11.—"*For vain is the help of man.*" As they had lately experimented in *Saul,* a king of their own choosing, but not able to save them from those proud Philistines.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 11.—So long as sight and reason find footing in matters, there is no place for faith and hope; the abundance of human helps puts not grace to proof, but the strength of faith is in the absence of them all. A man is stronger when he goeth on his feet alone, than when he standeth by a grip in his infancy, or leaneth on a staff in his old age: the two feet of faith and hope serve us best when we are fixed on the Rock of Sion alone.—*William Struther.*

Verse 12.—"*Through God we shall do,*" etc. In war these two must be joined, and indeed in all actions: He, *we; God* and *man.* 1. "We shall do valiantly," for God helps not remiss, or cowardly, or negligent men. 2. And yet, that being done, the work is *his:* "He shall tread down;" the blow and the overthrow are not to be attributed to *us,* but to *him.*—*Adam Clarke.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—Prayer of a church in low condition. I. *Complaint.* 1. Left of God's Spirit. 2. Scattered. II. *Cause.* Something displeasing to God. Neglect or actual sin; a subject for self-examination. III. *Cure.* The Lord's return to us and ours to him. In our version it is a prayer; in the Septuagint an expression of faith—"Thou wilt return."

Verse 2.—The perturbation, the prayer, the plea.—*G. R.*

Verse 3.—That God does afflict his people severely, and that he has good reason for the same.

Verse 3.—"*The wine of astonishment.*" A purgative, a tonic. Astonishing sin followed by astonishing chastisements, discoveries of corruption, of the spirituality of the law, of the terror of divine wrath, and by astonishing depressions, temptations, and conflicts.

Verse 4.—The banner of the gospel. I. Why a banner? A rallying point, meant to fight under, etc. II. By whom given. "*Thou.*" III. To whom. "*To them that fear thee.*" IV. What is to be done with it. "*To be displayed.*" V. For what cause. "*Because of the truth.*" Truth promotes truth.

Verse 5.—The deliverance of the elect needs a saving God, a mighty God ("*right hand*"), and a prayer-hearing God.

Verse 5 (*last clause*).—"*Save . . . and hear.*" The remarkable order of these words suggests that—1. In the purpose of God. 2. In the first works of grace. 3. Often under trial. 4. And specially in fierce temptations, God's saving precedes man's praying.

Verse 6.—God's holy promise, ground for present joy, and for boldly taking possession of the promised good.

Verse 7.—"*Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine.*" How, and in what respect, this world is the Christian's.

Verse 7.—"*Judah is my lawgiver.*" The believer owning no law but that which comes from Christ.

Verse 8.—"*Moab is my washpot.*" How we may make sinners subservient to our sanctification. We are warned by their sin, and punishment, etc. See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 983, "Moab is my washpot."

Verse 9.—The soulwinner's question. I. The object of attack; the strong city of man's heart, barricaded by depravity, ignorance, prejudice, custom, etc. II. Our main design. To penetrate, to reach the citadel for Jesus. III. Our great enquiry. Eloquence, learning, wit, none of these can force the gate, but there is One who can.

Verse 12.—Divine operation a reason for human activity.

PSALM LXI.

TITLE.—To the Chief Musician upon Neginah, a Psalm of David.—*The original indicates that both the hymn and the musical instrument were David's. He wrote the verses, and himself sang them to the stringed instrument whose sound he loved so well. We have left the Psalms entitled* Michtam, *but we shall still find much precious meaning though the golden name be wanting. We have met with the title of this Psalm before, in Psalms IV., VI., LIV., and LV., but with this difference, that in the present case the word is in the singular number: the Psalm itself is very personal, and well adapted for the private devotion of a single individual.*

SUBJECT AND DIVISION.—*This Psalm is a pearl. It is little, but precious. To many a mourner it has furnished utterance when the mind could not have devised speech for itself. It was evidently composed by David after he had come to the throne,—see verse* 6. *The second verse leads us to believe that it was written during the psalmist's enforced exile from the tabernacle, which was the visible abode of God: if so, the period of Absalom's rebellion has been most suitably suggested as the date of its authorship, and Delitzsch is correct in entitling it, "Prayer and thanksgiving of an expelled King on his way back to his throne."*

We might divide the verses according to the sense, but it is preferable to follow the author's own arrangement, and make a break at each SELAH.

EXPOSITION.

HEAR my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.
2 From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock *that* is higher than I.
3 For thou hast been a shelter for me, *and* a strong tower from the enemy.
4 I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.

1. "*Hear my cry, O God.*" He was in terrible earnest; he shouted, he lifted up his voice on high. He is not however content with the expression of his need: to give his sorrows vent is not enough for him, he wants actual audience of heaven, and manifest succour as the result. Pharisees may rest in their prayers; true believers are eager for an answer to them: ritualists may be satisfied when they have "said or sung" their litanies and collects, but living children of God will never rest till their supplications have entered the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth. "*Attend unto my prayer.*" Give it thy consideration, and such an answer as thy wisdom sees fit. When it comes to crying with us, we need not doubt but that it will come to attending with God. Our heavenly Father is not hardened against the cries of his own children. What a consoling thought it is that the Lord at all times hears his people's cries, and is never forgetful of their prayers; whatever else fails to move him, praying breath is never spent in vain!

2. "*From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee.*" He was banished from the spot which was the centre of his delight, and at the same time his mind was in a depressed and melancholy condition; both actually and figuratively he was an outcast, yet he does not therefore restrain prayer, but rather finds therein a reason for the louder and more importunate cries. To be absent from the place of divine worship was a sore sorrow to saints in the olden times; they

looked upon the tabernacle as the centre of the world, and they counted themselves to be at the fag-end of the universe when they could no longer resort to the sacred shrine; their heart was heavy as in a strange land when they were banished from its solemnities. Yet even they knew right well that no place is unsuitable for prayer. There may be an end of the earth, but there must not be an end to devotion. On creation's verge we may call upon God, for even there he is within call. No spot is too dreary, no condition too deplorable; whether it be the world's end or life's end, prayer is equally available. To pray in some circumstances needs resolve, and the psalmist here expresses it, "*I will cry.*" It was a wise resolution, for had he ceased to pray he would have become the victim of despair; there is an end to a man when he makes an end to prayer. Observe that David never dreamed of seeking any other God; he did not imagine the dominion of Jehovah to be local: he was at the end of the promised land, but he knew himself to be still in the territory of the Great King; to him only does he address his petitions. "*When my heart is overwhelmed:*"—when the huge waves of trouble wash over me, and I am completely submerged, not only as to my head, but also my heart. It is hard to pray when the very heart is drowning, yet gracious men plead best at such times. Tribulation brings us to God, and brings God to us. Faith's greatest triumphs are achieved in her heaviest trials. It is all over with me, affliction is all over me; it encompasses me as a cloud, it swallows me up like a sea, it shuts me in with thick darkness, yet God is near, near enough to hear my voice, and I will call him. Is not this brave talk? Mark how our psalmist tells the Lord, as if he knew he were hearing him, that he intended to call upon him: our prayer by reason of our distress may be like to a call upon a far-off friend, but our inmost faith has its quiet heart-whispers to the Lord as to one who is assuredly our very present help.

"*Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*" I see thee to be my refuge, sure and strong; but alas! I am confused, and cannot find thee; I am weak, and cannot climb thee. Thou art so steadfast, guide me; thou art so high, uplift me. There is a mint of meaning in this brief prayer. Along the iron-bound coast of our northern shores, lives are lost because the rocks are inaccessible to the shipwrecked mariner. A clergyman of one of the coast villages has with immense labour cut steps up from the beach to a large chamber, which he has excavated in the chalk cliff: here many mariners have been saved; they have climbed the rock, which had else been too high for them, and they have escaped. We have heard of late, however, that the steps have been worn away by the storms, and that poor sailors have perished miserably within sight of the refuge which they could not reach, for it was too high for them: it is therefore proposed to drive in iron stanchions, and to hang up chain ladders that shipwrecked mariners may reach the chambers in the rock. The illustration is self-interpreting. Our experience leads us to understand this verse right well, for the time was with us when we were in such amazement of soul by reason of sin, that although we knew the Lord Jesus to be a sure salvation for sinners, yet we could not come at him, by reason of our many doubts and forebodings. A Saviour would have been of no use to us if the Holy Spirit had not gently led us to him, and enabled us to rest upon him. To this day we often feel that we not only want a rock, but to be led to it. With this in view we treat very leniently the half-unbelieving prayers of awakened souls; for in their bewildered state we cannot expect from them all at once a fully believing cry. A seeking soul should at once believe in Jesus, but it is legitimate for a man to ask to be led to Jesus, the Holy Spirit is able to effect such a leading, and he can do it even though the heart be on the borders of despair.

How infinitely higher than we are is the salvation of God. We are low and grovelling, but it towers like some tall cliff far above us. This is its glory, and is our delight when we have once climbed into the rock, and claimed an interest in it; but while we are as yet trembling seekers, the glory and sublimity of salvation appal us, and we feel that we are too unworthy ever to be partakers

of it; hence we are led to cry for grace upon grace, and to see how dependent we are for everything, not only for the Saviour, but for the power to believe on him.

3. "*For thou hast been a shelter for me.*" Observe how the psalmist rings the changes on, "*Thou hast,*" and "*I will,*"—verses 3, 4, 5, and 6. Experience is the nurse of faith. From the past we gather arguments for present confidence. Many and many a time had the persecutions of Saul and the perils of battle emperilled David's life, and only by miracle had he escaped, yet was he still alive and unhurt; this he remembers, and he is full of hope. "*And a strong tower from the enemy.*" As in a fort impregnable, David had dwelt, because surrounded by omnipotence. Sweet is it beyond expression to remember the lovingkindnesses of the Lord in our former days, for he is unchangeable, and therefore will continue to guard us from all evil.

4. "*I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever.*" Let me once get back to thy courts, and nothing shall again expel me from them: even now in my banishment my heart is there; and ever will I continue to worship thee in spirit wherever my lot may be cast. Perhaps by the word "*tabernacle*" is here meant the dwelling-place of God; and if so, the sense is, I will dwell with the Lord, enjoying his sacred hospitality, and sure protection.

"There would I find a settled rest,
While others go and come;
No more a stranger, or a guest,
But like a child at home."

He who communes with God is always at home. The divine omnipresence surrounds such a one consciously; his faith sees all around him the palace of the King, in which he walks with exulting security and overflowing delight. Happy are the indoor servants who go not out from his presence. Hewers of wood and drawers of water in the tents of Jehovah are more to be envied than the princes who riot in the pavilions of kings. The best of all is that our residence with God is not for a limited period of time, but for ages; yea, for ages of ages, for time and for eternity: this is our highest and most heavenly privilege, "*I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever.*"

"*I will trust in the covert of thy wings.*" Often does our sweet singer use this figure; and far better is it to repeat one apt and instructive image, than for the sake of novelty to ransack creation for poor, strained metaphors. The chicks beneath the hen how safe, how comfortable, how happy! How warm the parent's bosom! How soft the cherishing feathers! Divine condescension allows us to appropriate the picture to ourselves, and how blessedly instructive and consoling it is! O for more trust; it cannot be too implicit: such a covert invites us to the most unbroken repose. SELAH. Rest we well may when we reach this point. Even the harp may be eloquently silent when deep, profound calm completely fills the bosom, and sorrow has sobbed itself into a peaceful slumber.

5 For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given *me* the heritage of those that fear thy name.

6 Thou wilt prolong the king's life: *and* his years as many generations.

7 He shall abide before God for ever: O prepare mercy and truth, *which* may preserve him.

8 So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.

5. "*For thou, O God, hast heard my vows.*" Proofs of divine faithfulness are to be had in remembrance, and to be mentioned to the Lord's honour. The prayer of verse 1 is certain of an answer because of the experience of verse 5, since we deal with an immutable God. "*Vows*" may rightly be joined with

prayers when they are lawful, well-considered, and truly for God's glory. It is great mercy on God's part to take any notice of the vows and promises of such faithless and deceitful creatures as we are. What we promise him is his due already, and yet he deigns to accept our vows as if we were not so much his servants as his free suitors who could give or withhold at pleasure. "*Thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name.*" We are made heirs, joint-heirs with all the saints, partakers of the same portion. With this we ought to be delighted. If we suffer, it is the heritage of the saints; if we are persecuted, are in poverty, or in temptation, all this is contained in the title-deeds of the heritage of the chosen. Those we are to sup with we may well be content to dine with. We have the same inheritance as the Firstborn himself; what better is conceivable? Saints are described as fearing the name of God; they are reverent worshippers; they stand in awe of the Lord's authority; they are afraid of offending him, they feel their own nothingness in the sight of the Infinite One. To share with such men, to be treated by God with the same favour as he metes out to them, is matter for endless thanksgiving. All the privileges of all the saints are also the privilege of each one.

6. "*Thou wilt prolong the king's life;*" or, better, "days to the days of the King thou wilt add." Death threatened, but God preserved his beloved. David, considering his many perils, enjoyed a long and prosperous reign. "*And his years as many generations.*" He lived to see generation after generation personally; in his descendants he lived as king through a very long period; his dynasty continued for many generations; and in Christ Jesus, his seed and son, spiritually David reigns on evermore. Thus he who began at the foot of the rock, half drowned, and almost dead, is here led to the summit, and sings as a priest abiding in the tabernacle, a king ruling with God for ever, and a prophet foretelling good things to come. (Verse 7.) See the uplifting power of faith and prayer. None so low but they may yet be set on high.

7. "*He shall abide before God for ever.*" Though this is true of David in a modified sense, we prefer to view the Lord Jesus as here intended as the lineal descendant of David, and the representative of his royal race. Jesus is enthroned before God to eternity; here is our safety, dignity, and delight. We reign in him; in him we are made to sit together in the heavenlies. David's personal claim to sit enthroned for ever is but a foreshadowing of the revealed privilege of all true believers. "*O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him.*" As men cry, "Long live the king," so we hail with acclamation our enthroned Immanuel, and cry, "Let mercy and truth preserve him." Eternal love and immutable faithfulness are the bodyguards of Jesus' throne, and they are both the providers and the preservers of all those who in him are made kings and priests unto God. We cannot keep ourselves, and nothing short of divine mercy and truth can do it; but these both can and will, nor shall the least of the people of God be suffered to perish.

8. "*So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever.*" Because my prayer is answered, my song shall be perpetual; because Jesus for ever sits at thy right hand, it shall be acceptable; because I am preserved in him, it shall be grateful. David had given vocal utterance to his prayer by a cry; he will now give expression to his praise by a song: there should be a parallel between our supplications and our thanksgivings. We ought not to leap in prayer, and limp in praise. The vow to celebrate the divine name "*for ever*" is no hyperbolical piece of extravagance, but such as grace and glory shall enable us to carry out to the letter. "*That I may daily perform my vows.*" To God who adds days to our days we will devote all our days. We vowed perpetual praise, and we desire to render it without intermission. We would worship God *de die in diem*, going right on as the days roll on. We ask no vacation from this heavenly vocation; we would make no pause in this sacred service. God daily performs his promises, let us daily perform our vows: he keeps his covenant, let us not forget ours. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth, even for evermore.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—The word *Neginah* (the singular of *Neginoth*) may be understood to be synonymous with the *kinnor* or harp: that is to say, the instrument of eight strings, probably played with a bow or plectrum.—*John Jebb.*

Verse 1.—"*Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.*" Aquinas saith that some read the words thus, *Intende ad cantica mea*, attend unto my songs—and so the words may be safely read, from the Hebrew word, רָנָה *ranah*, which signifies to shout or shrill out for joy—to note that the prayers of the saints are like pleasant songs and delightful ditties in the ears of God. No mirth, no music, can be so pleasing to us as the prayers of the saints are pleasing to God. Cant. ii. 14; Psalm cxli. 2.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 1.—"*My cry.*" There is a text in Job where the "hypocrites in heart" are spoken of condemningly, because "they cry not when he bindeth them." I like to feel that no hard fortitude is required of the chastened child of God, but that it ought to feel, and may cry, under the rod, without a single rebellious thought.—*Mary B. M. Duncan.*

Verses 1, 2.—One ejaculation begetteth another. "*Hear my cry;*" "*attend unto my prayer*" (yet no words thereof mentioned); and verse 2. "*From the end of the earth will I cry:*" he had thus cried, and he will therefore cry again and again. As billows of temptation ever and anon stop his mouth and interrupt him, so as he now and then doth but peep above water, and get breathing space, he will thus cry, "*Lead me*," or "guide me," or carry me to yonder "*rock which is higher than I.*"—*Thomas Cobbet* (1608—1686), *on Prayer.*

Verse 2.—"*From the end of the earth.*" This may be taken two ways: either *naturally*, and then it is an allusion to men that are far distant and remote from help, relief and comfort; or, as I may say, *ecclesiastically*, with reference to the temple of God, which was "*in medio terræ*," "in the midst and heart of the land," where God manifested and gave tokens of his gracious presence and favour: as if he had said, "I am at the end of the earth; far from any tokens, pledges, or manifestations of the love and favour of God, as well as from outward help and assistance."—*John Owen.*

Verse 2.—"*The end of the earth.*" What place was this, "*the end of the earth*," referring the expression to the writer of the Psalm? We know that the centre of the affections and devotions of the pious Israelite was the "holy city, Jerusalem; whither the tribes went up, even the tribes of the Lord, to testify unto Israel, and to give thanks unto the name of the Lord." The country of which this city was the capital, was to the Jew the world; it was the world within the world; the earth within the earth; the whole globe beside was to him a waste, a place out of the world; an extra-terrestrial territory, beyond the limits set up by the Lord Almighty. Thus in Holy Writ what is called the world, or the earth, frequently signifieth only that part thereof which was the heritage of the chosen people. . . . . "*The end of the earth*," then, as referred to the psalmist, would signify any place of bodily absence from the temple where the Deity had taken up his special abode, or any place whence his spiritual affections were unable to reach that temple. As referred to us, the expression signifies any sensible distance from God: for as God is the centre of life, hope, love, and joy, distance from him, of whatsoever degree, is the antipodes of the soul, a region of sterility and darkness; the Iceland of man's spirit.—*Alfred Bowen Evans*, 1852.

Verse 2.—"*I will cry unto thee.*" There is in this expression an endeavour to approach unto God; as you do when you "*cry*" after one whom you see at a distance, and are afraid he will go farther from you. It is the great work

of faith to cry out after God, at a distance, when you are afraid lest at the next turn he should be quite out of sight. Crying to the Lord supposes him to be withdrawing or departing.—*John Owen.*

Verse 2.—"*Cry.*" No matter how abrupt the prayer be, so it be the representation of our hearts. Thus did David. Where doth he pray? In banishment. When? When his spirit "*is overwhelmed.*" How doth he pray? He "*cried.*" Thus Hannah prayed herself into a composed state of mind. Remember, resignation is the work of the Spirit of God; and therefore you must plead for it before you have it.—*John Singleton* (—1706), *in* "*The Morning Exercises.*"

Verse 2.—"*Cry.*" Crying is a substitute for speech; and also the expression of earnestness.—*William Jay.*

Verse 2.—"*When my heart is overwhelmed.*" Troubles are of various kinds; some are *provoking*, some are *gnawing*, some are *perplexing*, and some are *overwhelming*; but whatever form they assume, they are troubles, and are part of the wear and tear of life. . . . . *Overwhelming troubles* are such as sweep over a man, just as the mighty billows of the ocean sweep over and submerge the sands. These are troubles which struggle with us, as it were, for life and death; troubles which would leave us helpless wrecks; troubles which enter into conflict with us in our prime, which grapple with us in our health and strength, and threaten to conquer us by sheer force, no matter how bravely we may contend. Such trouble the psalmist knew.—*Philip Bennett Power, in* "*The 'I wills' of the Psalms,*" 1861.

Verse 2.—"*Heart.*" The heart is here represented to us as being overwhelmed, or, as it is otherwise translated, "covered over;" it is smothered in, unable to perform its functions with proper action, unable to throw out the blood to the extremities, to give them needed vitality and power for necessary effort. When the action of the heart is paralyzed, even temporally, it will tell upon all the members, a chill there sends its cold vibration through every limb; Satan knows this well, and so all his dealings are heart dealings, efforts to paralyze the very spring of life itself. This is precisely what we ourselves have experienced; we have partially felt death within us, we have felt a gradual numbing of our heart; a gradual diminution in the quickness of its beat; a gradual closing in, and pressure of a weight upon it, and this was the "*overwhelming*" process.—*Philip Bennett Power.*

Verse 2.—"*Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*" The *tower*, in Psalm xviii. 2, is "*an high tower*," and the *rock* is here an *high rock*, the rock "*higher than I;*" and yet there is a way to get into the highest towers; by scaling ladders a man may get over the high walls of towers. This tower and rock were too high for David himself to get into, and therefore he sets to the scaling ladder. "*Lead me to the rock*, and into the tower *that is higher than I. Hear my cry, attend unto my prayer.*" So he makes prayer the scaling ladder to get upon that rock and into that tower that otherwise had been too high for him; he gets that safety and deliverance which otherwise but by prayer unto God had been impossible to have been obtained.—*Jeremiah Dyke.*

Verse 2.—"*Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*" The language is very remarkable. It gives us the idea of a man suffering shipwreck. The vessel in which he has been sailing has sunk. He has been plunged into the mighty ocean; and there he is buffeting the waves, struggling for life, panting for breath, and just about to give up all for lost. Suddenly he discovers a *rock* towering above him. If he can but climb up to the top of it, and get sure footing upon it, the billows will not be able to reach him, and he will be safe. Now, the prayer in our text is the cry of that poor wretch for help. He is so spent and exhausted, that he cannot reach the rock *himself.* He shouts aloud for the friendly hand of some one stronger than himself, or for a rope that may be flung to him by those who are already safe on the rock, if by these helps he may gain it. "*Lead me to the rock*," cries the poor perishing wretch. "O, lead me, guide me, direct me to it; for I am so worn and spent, that I

cannot reach it otherwise. I am at the point to die; and I must sink, and be no more seen for ever, if there is none to help me." Thus he calls for some one to rescue him from the deep, and to place him on the "*rock*." But what rock? He knows that unless the rock be a high one, he will not be in safety, though he should be on it. "*The rock*," he says, "must be *higher than I*, or the waves will reach me, and wash me off again." It is not a rock, the top of which just shows itself above the sea, no higher than a man's own body, that will save the life of a shipwrecked mariner. Such a rock may occasion the wreck, but it will not afford any help to the sufferers afterwards; it is a rock to split upon for destruction, not to stand upon for safety. "*Lead me to the rock*," or as it is in the Prayer-book version, "Set me upon the rock, that is *higher than I!*" . . . . The text having shown us the *danger of sin*, does not leave us comfortless; it shows us the *security of the refuge*. We have before remarked, that the prayer of David, as a shipwrecked man, is, to be "led to," and set upon, a "*rock*," that is *higher than himself*. The expression seems to imply much. The rock that is higher than *he*, must be higher than *any man;* for David was a mighty monarch. He implies, therefore, that the refuge he seeks must be more than any "arm of flesh" can afford him; it must be therefore *divine*.—*Condensed from a Sermon by Fountain Elwin*, 1842.

Verse 2.—It is more the image of one overtaken by the tide, as he is hastening onwards to get beyond its reach, and yet with every step he sees it rolling nearer and nearer to him; he hears its angry roar, the loosening sand sinks beneath his tread—a few minutes more, and the waves will be around him; despair hath "*overwhelmed his heart;*" when in the very depths of his agony he sees a point of rock high above the waves. "O that I could reach it and be safe!" And then comes the cry, the agonising cry, to him that is mighty to save, "*Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*" It is the sinner's cry to the sinner's Saviour!—*Barton Bouchier, A.M., in "Manna in the Heart; or, Daily Comments on the Book of Psalms,"* 1855.

Verse 2.—"*Lead me to the rock.*" If we would find ourselves upon the rock, and enjoy the realisation of being so, we must be dependent upon another's hand. And that hand can do everything for us, even in our worst of times. When we are so blinded by the salt waves that dash in our eyes, so reeling in brain that we cannot perhaps think, much less make continuous efforts, there is a hand which can lead us, which can draw us out of the waters, which can set our feet upon the rock. Surely we have already experienced the power and tenderness of that hand? and it may be that in the reader's case, the waves, as they made sure of their prey, found it supernaturally drawn forth from them, that it might be set upon a rock, immovable amid all waters, and sufficient amid all storms!—*Philip Bennett Power.*

Verse 2.—"*The rock that is higher than I.*" The rock of our salvation, then, is "higher than we." Here we have the Deity of Christ, the Rock, set forth; in this he is "higher than we." And except as he is thus higher, as he is God, he could not be a Saviour; for "He is a just God, as well as a Saviour." A being no higher than we, or but a little higher, as the angels (for we are but "a little lower than they"), though he might teach us, or warn us, or console us, could never save us. The prey is in the hands of the mighty, and the Almighty alone is mightier. But a rock is not only high, but deep; it not only erects its front above the waves, but its base is fixed in the ocean's bed. "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." Job. xi. 7. Here we have the humanity of him who is the rock; that humanity by which he was able to go down to the deeps, as well as ride triumphantly on the bosom of the waters—those deeps, whereof David speaking experimentally of himself, spake prophetically of him; the depths of our fall and degradation—that humanity in which he went down into the grave, into the recesses of the intermediate state, and "preached to the spirits in prison."

This is our rock, both deep and high; the rock of our salvation; to which those whose sins have set them at "the end of the earth," desire to be brought, that they may find a place of safe standing. Let not those fear who feel the bitterness of distance from God, for they shall be brought nigh; desolate may be the coast to which they are driven, but over against it is the Paradise of God; clouds and darkness may gather at the base of this rock of safety, but "eternal sunshine settles on its head."—*Alfred Bowen Evans.*

Verse 2.—"*Higher.*" A hiding place must be *locus excelsissimus.* Your low houses are soon scaled. Jesus Christ is a high place; he is as high as heaven. He is the Jacob's ladder that reacheth from earth to heaven. Gen. xxviii. 12. He is too high for men, too high for devils; no creature can scale these high walls.—*Ralph Robinson* (1614—1655), *in* "*Christ All and in All.*"

Verse 4.—"*I will abide in thy tabernacle.*" Some render it, *I shall dwell in thy tent* or *pavilion royal*, making it a metaphor from warfare, where those that are in the king's own tent must needs be in greatest safety. And this sense suiteth well with the following words: "*I will trust in the covert of thy wings.*"—*John Trapp.*

Verse 4.—"*Covert of thy wings.*" To a person who should penetrate the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle, the most conspicuous object would be the outspread wings above the mercy-seat: under their shelter and upon the mercy-seat David would abide in quiet confidence.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 5 (*first clause*).—About this time I began to know that there is a God who hears and answers prayer.—*John Newton, in his Journal.*

Verse 5.—"*Thou, O God, hast heard my vows:*" that is, his prayers, which are always to be put up with vows. Indeed, that prayer is a blank which hath not a vow in it. Is it a mercy thou prayest him to give? If sincere, thou wilt vow to praise him for it, and serve him with it. Is it a sin thou prayest against? Except thou jugglest with God, thou wilt vow as well as pray against it.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 5.—"*The heritage.*" Eternal life is called an inheritance. Theodoret remarks: "The true inheritance is eternal life, concerning which Christ saith to the sheep on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world. This inheritance the Lord giveth to them that fear him." In Ephesians i. 14, the Spirit is called "the earnest of our inheritance." In Colossians i. 12, the apostle exhorts them "to give thanks unto the Father, who hath made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." On this verse we have the golden comment of Chrysostom, reiterated by Theophylact. He calls it an inheritance, to show that no man obtaineth the kingdom by his own good works; for no man hath so lived as to render himself worthy of the kingdom, but all is of the grace of God. Wherefore, he saith, "When ye have done all, say that we are unprofitable servants, for we have only done what we ought to have done."—*John Casper Suicer's "Thesaurus,"* 1728.

Verse 6.—"*Thou wilt prolong the king's life,*" etc. David cannot be considered as using these words of gratulation with an exclusive reference to himself. It is true that he lived to an extreme old age, and died full of days, leaving the kingdom in a settled condition, and in the hands of his son, who succeeded him; but he did not exceed the period of one man's life, and the greater part of it was spent in continued dangers and anxieties. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the series of years, and even ages, of which he speaks, extends prospectively to the coming of Christ, it being the very condition of the kingdom, as I have often remarked, that God maintained them as one people under one head, or when scattered, united them again. The same succession still subsists in reference to ourselves. Christ must be viewed as living in his

members to the end of the world. To this Isaiah alludes, when he says, "Who shall declare his generation or age?"—words in which he predicts that the church would survive through all ages, notwithstanding the incessant danger of destruction to which it is exposed through the attacks of its enemies, and the many storms assailing it. So here David foretells the uninterrupted succession of the kingdom down to the time of Christ.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 6.—"*The king's life: and his years.*" David speaks designedly of the days of the "*king*" instead of his *own* days, as might have been expected from what had been said, for the purpose of showing that he considered the promise of eternal dominion as relating not to himself personally, but to his family—the royal family of David.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 7.—"*O prepare mercy.*" David having declared in his own behalf the purpose of God towards him for everlasting salvation, "*he*," speaking of himself, "*shall abide before God for ever:*" he withal considering what he was to run through in this life, and what it might require to keep him unto the end, and so "*for ever*," doth presently thereupon, in way of prayer, subjoin, "*O prepare* mercy and truth, which may *preserve* me." As if he had said, I have yet a long journey to go, and through many hazards, and thy promise is, *I shall abide afore thee for ever.* Lord, thou hast need lay up and aforehand prepare an abundance of mercy and truth to preserve me for time to come.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 8.—They that are godly are oppressed and vexed in the church or congregation for this purpose: that when they are pressed, they should cry; and when they cry, that they should be heard; and when they are heard, that they should laud and praise God.—*Augustine.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Whole Psalm.—The progressive "I wills." I. I will cry. II. I will abide in thy tabernacle. III. I will trust. IV. I will sing praise.

Verse 1.—Answers to prayer to be earnestly sought. I. What hinders the answer of prayer? II. What is our duty when answers are denied? III. What encouragements we have to believe that the delay is only temporary.

Verse 2.—"*Lead me.*" I. Show me the way: reveal Jesus. II. Enable me to tread it: work faith in me. III. Uplift me where I cannot tread: do for me what is beyond me.

Verse 2.—"*Higher than I.*" Jesus greater than our highest efforts, attainments, desires, expectations, conceptions.

Verse 2.—God, the saints' rock.—*John Owen's Two Sermons.* Works. Vol. IX., pp. 237—256.

Verse 2.—The heart's cry and desire. I. A recognition of a place of safety; then, II. We have this place brought before us, as abundantly sufficient, when personal weakness has been realised. III. This place cannot be attained without the help of another's hand. IV. The character of this refuge, and the position of a believer when availing himself of it: the place of refuge is "a rock," and the position of the believer is "upon a rock."—*P. B. Power.*

Verses 2, 3.—I. *How* would he pray? "I will *cry* unto thee." II. *Where* would he pray? "From the ends of the earth." III. *When* would he pray? "When my heart is overwhelmed." IV. *For what* would he pray? "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." V. *Whence* does he derive his encouragement to pray? "For thou *hast been*," etc. (verse 3).—*William Jay.*

Verse 3.—"*A shelter*" from the rain of trouble, the storm of persecution, the floods of Satanic temptation, the heat of divine wrath, the blast of death. The ark, Lot's mountain, the blood-stained door in Egypt, the city of refuge, the cave Adullam. "*A strong tower:*" lasting in itself, impregnable against foes, secure for the occupant.

Verses 4, 7.—I. My privilege, "*I will abide*" (verse 4). II. The ground of it, "*He shall abide*," etc. (verse 7).

Verse 4 (*first clause*).—Where the priest has presented the sacrifice; where the law is laid up in the ark as fulfilled; where the light of the Spirit's candlestick shines; where the manna abides; where the glory is above the mercy-seat; where no enemy can enter; where I commune with a covenant God.

Verse 5 (*second clause*).—Enquire whether or no it fares with us as with the saints.

Verses 5, 8.—I. Vows heard in heaven. II. Vows to be carefully fulfilled on earth.

Verse 5 (*second clause*).—I. They that fear God have a "heritage." II. This heritage is "given." III. We may know that we possess it.—*William Jay.*

Verse 6.—Our King, his eternal existence, our personal joy in this, and our joy for our descendants

PSALM LXII.

TITLE.—To the Chief Musician, to Jeduthun.—*This is the second Psalm which is dedicated to Jeduthun or Ethan, the former one being the thirty-ninth, a Psalm which is almost a twin with this in many respects, containing in the original the word translated* only *four times as this does six. We shall meet with two other Psalms similarly appointed for Jeduthun: namely, Psalms LXXVII. and LXXXIX. The sons of Jeduthun were porters or doorkeepers, according to* 1. Chron. xvi. 42. *Those who serve well make the best of singers, and those who occupy the highest posts in the choir must not be ashamed to wait at the posts of the doors of the Lord's house.*

A PSALM OF DAVID.—*Even had not the signature of the royal poet been here placed, we should have been sure from internal evidence that he alone penned these stanzas; they are truly Davidic. From the sixfold use of the word,* ac *or* only, *we have been wont to call it* THE ONLY PSALM.

DIVISION.—*The psalmist has marked his own pauses, by inserting* SELAH *at the end of verses* 4 *and* 8. *His true and sole confidence in God laughs to scorn all its enemies. When this Psalm was composed it was not necessary for us to know, since true faith is always in season, and is usually under trial. Moreover, the sentiments here uttered are suitable to occasions which are very frequent in a believer's life, and therefore no one historic incident is needful for their explanation.*

EXPOSITION

TRULY my soul waiteth upon God: from him *cometh* my salvation.

2 He only *is* my rock and my salvation; *he is* my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.

3 How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall *shall ye be, and as* a tottering fence.

4 They only consult to cast *him* down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah.

1. "*Truly*," or verily, or only. The last is probably the most prominent sense here. That faith alone is true which rests on God alone, that confidence which relies but partly on the Lord is vain confidence. If we Englished the word by our word "*verily*," as some do, we should have here a striking reminder of our blessed Lord's frequent use of that adverb. "*My soul waiteth upon God.*" My inmost self draws near in reverent obedience to God. I am no hypocrite or mere posture maker. To wait upon God, and for God, is the habitual position of faith; to wait on him truly is sincerity; to wait on him only is spiritual chastity. The original is, "only to God is my soul silence." The presence of God alone could awe his heart into quietude, submission, rest, and acquiescence; but when that was felt, not a rebellious word or thought broke the peaceful silence. The proverb that speech is silver but silence is gold, is more than true in this case. No eloquence in the world is half so full of meaning as the patient silence of a child of God. It is an eminent work of grace to bring down the will and subdue the affections to such a degree, that the whole mind lies before the Lord like the sea beneath the wind, ready to be moved by every breath of his mouth, but free from all inward and self-caused emotion, as

also from all power to be moved by anything other than the divine will. We should be wax to the Lord, but adamant to every other force. "*From him cometh my salvation.*" The good man will, therefore, in patience possess his soul till deliverance comes: faith can hear the footsteps of coming salvation, because she has learned to be silent. Our salvation in no measure or degree comes to us from any inferior source; let us, therefore, look alone to the true fountain, and avoid the detestable crime of ascribing to the creature what belongs alone to the Creator. If to wait on God be worship, to wait on the creature is idolatry; if to wait on God alone be true faith, to associate an arm of flesh with him is audacious unbelief.

2. "*He only is my rock and my salvation.*" Sometimes a metaphor may be more full of meaning and more suggestive than literal speech: hence the use of the figure of a rock, the very mention of which would awaken grateful memories in the psalmist's mind. David had often lain concealed in rocky caverns, and here he compares his God to such a secure refuge; and, indeed, declares him to be his only real protection, all-sufficient in himself and never failing. At the same time, as if to show us that what he wrote was not mere poetic sentiment but blessed reality, the literal word "*salvation*" follows the figurative expression: that our God is our refuge is no fiction, nothing in the world is more a matter of fact. "*He is my defence,*" my height, my lofty rampart, my high-fort. Here we have another and bolder image; the tried believer not only abides in God as in a cavernous rock; but dwells in him as a warrior in some bravely defiant tower or lordly castle. "*I shall not be greatly moved.*" His personal weakness might cause him to be somewhat moved; but his faith would come in to prevent any very great disturbance: not much would he be tossed about. "*Moved,*" as one says, "but not removed." Moved like a ship at anchor which swings with the tide, but is not swept away by the tempest. When a man knows assuredly that the Lord is his salvation, he cannot be very much cast down: it would need more than all the devils in hell greatly to alarm a heart which knows God to be its salvation.

3. "*How long will ye imagine mischief against a man?*" It is always best to begin with God, and then may we confront our enemies. Make all sure with heaven, then may you grapple with earth and hell. David expostulates with his insensate foes; he marvels at their dogged perseverance in malice, after so many failures and with certain defeat before them. He tells them that their design was an imaginary one, which they never could accomplish however deeply they might plot. It is a marvel that men will readily enough continue in vain and sinful courses, and yet to persevere in grace is so great a difficulty as to be an impossibility, were it not for divine assistance. The persistency of those who oppose the people of God is so strange that we may well expostulate with them and say, "How long will ye thus display your malice?" A hint is given in the text as to the cowardliness of so many pressing upon one man; but none are less likely to act a fair and manly part than those who are opposed to God's people for righteousness' sake. Satan could not enter into combat with Job in fair duel, but must needs call in the Sabeans and Chaldeans, and even then must borrow the lightning and the wind before his first attack was complete. If there were any shame in him, or in his children, they would be ashamed of the dastardly manner in which they have waged war against the seed of the woman. Ten thousand to one has not seemed to them too mean an advantage; there is not a drop of chivalrous blood in all their veins. "*Ye shall be slain all of you.*" Your edged tools will cut your own fingers. Those who take the sword shall perish with the sword. However many or fierce the bands of the wicked may be, they shall not escape the just retribution of heaven; rigorously shall the great Lawgiver exact blood from men of blood, and award death to those who seek the death of others. "*As a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.*" Boastful persecutors bulge and swell with pride, but they are only as a bulging wall ready to fall in a heap; they lean forward to seize their prey, but it is only as a tottering fence inclines to the earth upon which it will soon lie at length.

They expect men to bow to them, and quake for fear in their presence; but men made bold by faith see nothing in them to honour, and very, very much to despise. It is never well on our part to think highly of ungodly persons; whatever their position, they are near their destruction, they totter to their fall; it will be our wisdom to keep our distance, for no one is advantaged by being near a falling wall; if it does not crush with its weight, it may stifle with its dust.

The passage is thought to be more correctly rendered as follows:—"How long will ye press on one man, that ye may crush him in a body, like a toppling wall, a sinking fence?"* We have, however, kept to our own version as yielding a good and profitable meaning. Both senses may blend in our meditations; for if David's enemies battered him as though they could throw him down like a bulging wall, he, on the other hand, foresaw that they themselves would by retributive justice be overthrown like an old, crumbling, leaning, yielding fence.

4. "*They only consult to cast him down from his excellency.*" The excellencies of the righteous are obnoxious to the wicked, and the main object of their fury. The elevation which God gives to the godly in Providence, or in repute, is also the envy of the baser sort, and they labour to pull them down to their own level. Observe the concentration of malice upon one point *only*, as here set in contrast with the sole reliance of the gracious one upon his Lord. If the wicked could but ruin the work of grace in us, they would be content; to crush our character, to overturn our influence, is the object of their consultation. "*They delight in lies;*" hence they hate the truth and the truthful, and by falsehood endeavour to compass their overthrow. To lie is bad enough, but to delight in it is one of the blackest marks of infamy. "*They bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly.*" Flattery has ever been a favourite weapon with the enemies of good men; they can curse bitterly enough when it serves their turn; meanwhile, since it answers their purpose, they mask their wrath, and with smooth words pretend to bless those whom they would willingly tear in pieces. It was fortunate for David that he was well practised in silence, for to cozening deceivers there is no other safe reply. "*Selah.*" Here pause, and consider with astonishment the futile rancour of unholy men, and the perfect security of such as rest themselves upon the Lord.

5 My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation *is* from him.

6 He only *is* my rock and my salvation: *he is* my defence; I shall not be moved.

7 In God *is* my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, *and* my refuge, *is* in God.

8 Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God *is* a refuge for us. Selah.

"*My soul, wait thou only upon God.*" When we have already practised a virtue, it is yet needful that we bind ourselves to a continuance in it. The soul is apt to be dragged away from its anchorage, or is readily tempted to add a second confidence to the one sole and sure ground of reliance; we must, therefore, stir ourselves up to maintain the holy position which we were at first able to assume. Be still silent, O my soul! submit thyself completely, trust immovably, wait patiently. Let none of thy enemies' imaginings, consultings, flatteries, or maledictions cause thee to break the King's peace. Be like the sheep before her shearers, and like thy Lord, conquer by the passive resistance of victorious patience: thou canst only achieve this as thou shalt be inwardly persuaded of God's presence, and as thou waitest solely and alone on him. Unmingled faith is undismayed. Faith with a single eye sees herself secure, but if her eye be

* So Dr. Kay, of Calcutta, translates it.

darkened by two confidences, she is blind and useless. "*For my expectation is from him.*" We expect from God because we believe in him. Expectation is the child of prayer and faith, and is owned of the Lord as an acceptable grace. We should desire nothing but what it would be right for God to give, then our expectation would be all from God; and concerning truly good things we should not look to second causes, but to the Lord alone, and so again our expectation would be all from him. The vain expectations of worldly men come not; they promise, but there is no performance; our expectations are on the way, and in due season will arrive to satisfy our hopes. Happy is the man who feels that all he has, all he wants, and all he expects are to be found in his God.

6. "*He only is my rock and my salvation.*" Alone, and without other help, God is the foundation and completion of my safety. We cannot too often hear the toll of that great bell *only*; let it ring the death-knell of all carnal reliances, and lead us to cast ourselves on the bare arm of God. "*He is my defence.*" Not my defender only, but my actual protection. I am secure, because he is faithful. "*I shall not be moved*"—not even in the least degree. See how his confidence grows. In the second verse an adverb qualified his quiet; here, however, it is absolute; he altogether defies the rage of his adversaries, he will not stir an inch, nor be made to fear even in the smallest degree. A living faith grows; experience develops the spiritual muscles of the saint, and gives a manly force which our religious childhood has not yet reached.

7. "*In God is my salvation and my glory.*" Wherein should we glory but in him who saves us? Our honour may well be left with him who secures our souls. To find all in God, and to glory that it is so, is one of the sure marks of an enlightened soul. "*The rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.*" He multiplies titles, for he would render much honour to the Lord, whom he had tried, and proved to be a faithful God under so many aspects. Ignorance needs but few words, but when experience brings a wealth of knowledge, we need varied expressions to serve as coffers for our treasure. God who is our rock when we flee for shelter, is also our *strong* rock when we stand firm and defy the foe; he is to be praised under both characters. Observe how the psalmist brands his own initials upon every name which he rejoicingly gives to his God—*my* expectation, *my* rock, *my* salvation, *my* glory, *my* strength, *my* refuge; he is not content to know that the Lord is all these things; he acts faith towards him, and lays claim to him under every character. What are the mines of Peru or Golconda to me if I have no inheritance in them? It is the word *my* which puts the honey into the comb. If our experience has not yet enabled us to realise the Lord under any of these consoling titles, we must seek grace that we may yet be partakers of their sweetness. The bees in some way or other penetrate the flowers and collect their juices; it must be hard for them to enter the closed cups and mouthless bags of some of the favourites of the garden, yet the honey-gatherers find or make a passage; and in this they are our instructors, for into each delightful name, character, and office of our covenant God our persevering faith must find an entrance, and from each it must draw delight.

8. "*Trust in him at all times.*" Faith is an abiding duty, a perpetual privilege. We should trust when we can see, as well as when we are utterly in the dark. Adversity is a fit season for faith; but prosperity is not less so. God at all times deserves our confidence. We at all times need to place our confidence in him. A day without trust in God is a day of wrath, even if it be a day of mirth. Lean ever, ye saints, on him, on whom the world leans. "*Ye people, pour out your heart before him.*" Ye to whom his love is revealed, reveal yourselves to him. His heart is set on you, lay bare your hearts to him. Turn the vessel of your soul upside down in his secret presence, and let your inmost thoughts, desires, sorrows, and sins be poured out like water. Hide nothing from him, for you *can* hide nothing. To the Lord unburden your soul: let him be your only father-confessor, for he only can absolve you when he has heard your confession. To keep our griefs to ourselves is to hoard up wretchedness. The stream will swell and rage if you

dam it up: give it a clear course, and it leaps along and creates no alarm. Sympathy we need, and if we unload our hearts at Jesus' feet, we shall obtain a sympathy as practical as it is sincere, as consolatory as it is ennobling. The writer in the *Westminster Assembly's Annotations* well observes that it is the tendency of our wicked nature to bite on the bridle, and hide our grief in sullenness; but the gracious soul will overcome this propensity, and utter its sorrow before the Lord. "*God is a refuge for us.*" Whatever he may be to others, his own people have a peculiar heritage in him; "*for us*" he is undoubtedly a refuge: here then is the best of reasons for resorting to him whenever sorrows weigh upon our bosoms. Prayer is peculiarly the duty of those to whom the Lord has specially revealed himself as their defence.

"SELAH." Precious pause! Timely silence! Sheep may well lie down when such pasture is before them.

9 Surely men of low degree *are* vanity, *and* men of high degree *are* a lie: to be laid in the balance, they *are* altogether *lighter* than vanity.

10 Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart *upon them.*

11 God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power *belongeth* unto God.

12 Also unto thee, O Lord, *belongeth* mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.

9. "*Surely men of low degree are vanity.*" Here the word is *only* again; men of low degree are only vanity, nothing more. They are many and enthusiastic, but they are not to be depended on; they are mobile as the waves of the sea, ready to be driven to and fro by any and every wind; they cry "Hosanna" to-day, and "Crucify him" to-morrow. The instability of popular applause is a proverb; as well build a house with smoke as find comfort in the adulation of the multitude. As the first son of Adam was called Abel or vanity, so here we are taught that all the sons of Adam are Abels: it were well if they were all so in character as well as in name; but alas! in this respect, too many of them are Cains. "*And men of high degree are a lie.*" That is worse. We gain little by putting our trust in the aristocracy, they are not one whit better than the democracy; nay, they are even worse, for we expect something from them, but get nothing. May we not trust the *élite?* Surely reliance may be placed in the educated, the chivalrous, the intelligent? For this reason are they a lie; because they promise so much, and in the end, when relied upon, yield nothing but disappointment. How wretched is that poor man who puts his trust in princes. The more we rely upon God, the more shall we perceive the utter hollowness of every other confidence. "*To be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.*" Take a true estimate of them; judge them neither by quantity nor by appearance, but by weight, and they will no longer deceive you. Calmly deliberate, quietly ponder, and your verdict will be that which inspiration here records. Vainer than vanity itself are all human confidences: the great and the mean, alike, are unworthy of our trust. A feather has some weight in the scale, vanity has none, and creature confidence has less than that: yet such is the universal infatuation, that mankind prefer an arm of flesh to the power of the invisible but almighty Creator; and even God's own children are too apt to be bitten with this madness.

10 "*Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery.*" Wealth ill-gotten is the trust only of fools, for the deadly pest lies in it; it is full of canker, it reeks with God's curse. To tread down the poor and silence their cries for justice, is the delight of many a braggart bully, who in his arrogance imagines that he may defy both God and man; but he is warned in these words, and it will be well for him if he takes the warning, for the Judge of all the earth will

surely visit upon men the oppression of the innocent, and the robbery of the poor: both of these may be effected legally in the courts of man, but no twistings of the law, no tricks and evasions will avail with the Court of Heaven. "*If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.*" If they grow in an honest, providential manner, as the result of industry or commercial success, do not make much account of the circumstance; be not unduly elated, do not fix your love upon your money-bags. To bow an immortal spirit to the constant contemplation of fading possessions is extreme folly. Shall those who call the Lord their glory, glory in yellow earth? Shall the image and superscription of Cæsar deprive them of communion with him who is the image of the invisible God? As we must not rest in men, so neither must we repose in money. Gain and fame are only so much foam of the sea. All the wealth and honour the whole world can afford would be too slender a thread to bear up the happiness of an immortal soul.

11. "*God hath spoken once.*" So immutable is God that he need not speak twice, as though he had changed; so infallible, that one utterance suffices, for he cannot err; so omnipotent, that his solitary word achieves all his designs. We speak often and say nothing; God speaks once and utters eternal verities. All our speaking may yet end in sound; but he speaks, and it is done; he commands, and it stands fast. "*Twice have I heard this.*" Our meditative soul should hear the echo of God's voice again and again. What he speaks once in revelation, we should be always hearing. Creation and providence are evermore echoing the voice of God; "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." We have two ears, that we may hear attentively, and the spiritual have inner ears with which they hear indeed. He hears twice in the best sense who hears with his heart as well as his ears. "*That power belongeth unto God.*" He is the source of it, and in him it actually abides. This one voice of God we ought always to hear, so as to be preserved from putting our trust in creatures in whom there can be no power, since all power is in God. What reason for faith is here! It can never be unwise to rest upon the almighty arm. Out of all troubles he can release us, under all burdens sustain us, while men must fail us at the last, and may deceive us even now. May our souls hear the thunder of Jehovah's voice as he claims all power, and henceforth may we wait only upon God!

12. "*Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy.*" This tender attribute sweetens the grand thought of his power: the divine strength will not crush us, but will be used for our good. God is so full of mercy that it belongs to him, as if all the mercy in the universe came from God, and still was claimed by him as his possession. His mercy, like his power, endureth for ever, and is ever present in him, ready to be revealed, "*For thou renderest to every man according to his work.*" This looks rather like justice than mercy; but if we understand it to mean that God graciously rewards the poor, imperfect works of his people, we see in it a clear display of mercy. May it not also mean that according to the work he allots us is the strength which he renders to us? he is not a hard master; he does not bid us make bricks without straw, but he metes out to us strength equal to our day. In either meaning we have power and mercy blended, and have a double reason for waiting only upon God. Man neither helps us nor rewards us; God will do both. In him power and grace are eternally resident; our faith should therefore patiently hope and quietly wait, for we shall surely see the salvation of God. *Deo soli gloria.* **All glory be to God only.**

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Psalms lxii. *and* lxiii. *compared.*—ONLY AND EARLY.—There is a sweet and profitable lesson taught us in Psalms lxii. and lxiii. The heart is ever prone to divide its confidence between God and the creature. This will never do. We must "wait *only* upon God." "He *only*" must be our "rock," our "salvation," and our "defence." Then we are frequently tempted to look to an arm of flesh *first*, and when that fails us, we look to God. This will never do either. He must be our *first* as well as our *only* resource. "O God, thou art my God, *early* will I seek thee." This is the way in which the heart should ever treat the blessed God. This is the lesson of Psalm lxiii. When we have learnt the blessedness of seeking God "*only*," we shall be sure to seek him "*early*."—*Charles Mackintosh, in "Things New and Old,"* 1858.

Whole Psalm.—There is in it throughout not one single word (and this is a rare occurrence), in which the prophet expresses *fear* or *dejection;* and there is also no prayer in it, although, on other occasions, when in danger, he never omits to pray. . . . . The prophet found himself remarkably well furnished in reference to that part of piety which consists in πληροφορία, the full assurance and perfection of faith; and therefore he designed to rear a monument of this his state of mind, for the purpose of stimulating the reader to the same attainment.—*Moses Amyraut,* 1596—1664.

Whole Psalm.—Athanasius says of this Psalm: "Against all attempts upon thy body, thy state, thy soul, thy fame, temptations, tribulations, machinations, defamations, say this Psalm."—*John Donne.*

Verse 1.—"*Only.*" The particle may be rendered *only*, as restrictive; or, *surely*, as affirmative. Our translators have rendered it differently in different verses of this Psalm; in verse 1, "*truly*;" in verses, 2, 4, 5, 6, "*only*;" in verse 9, "*surely*." If we render "*only*," the meaning will be here that God exclusively is the object of trust; if "*surely*," that this truth, that God is his salvation, has come home to him with a more lively conviction, with a more blessed certainty than ever. The first line of the verse rendered literally is, "*Only unto God my soul is silence.*"—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 1.—"*Truly my soul waiteth upon God,*" etc. In the use of means, for answers of prayer, for performance of promises, and for deliverance from enemies, and out of every trouble: or, *is silent*, as the Targum; not as to prayer, but as to murmuring; patiently and quietly waiting for salvation until the Lord's time come to give it; being *subject* to him, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; resigned to his will, and patient under his afflicting hand: it denotes a quiet, patient waiting on the Lord, and not merely bodily exercise in outward ordinances; but an inward frame of spirit, a soul-waiting on the Lord, and that in truth and reality, in opposition to mere form and show.—*John Gill.*

Verse 1.—"*Truly my soul waiteth upon God;*" or, as the Hebrew, *My soul is silent.* Indeed, waiting on God for deliverance, in an afflicted state, consists much in a holy silence. It is a great mercy, in an affliction, to have our bodily senses, so as not to lie raving, but still and quiet, much more to have the heart silent and patient; and we find the heart is as soon heated into a distemper as the head. Now what the sponge is to the cannon, when hot with often shooting, hope is to the soul in multiplied afflictions; it cools the spirit and meekens it, so that it doth not break out into distempered thoughts or words against God. [See also verse 5.]—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 1.—"*Waiteth.*" *Waiting* is nothing else but *hope and trust lengthened.*—*John Trapp.*

Verse 1.—"*My soul is silent before God.*" As if he had said: To me as a man God has put in subjection all his creatures; to me as a king he has subjected the whole of Judæa, the Philistines, the Moabites, Syrians, Idumeans,

Ammonites, and other tribes; having taken me from the sheep-cotes he has adorned me with a crown and sceptre now these thirty years, and extended my kingdom to the sea, and to the great river Euphrates; it is not without reason, then, that I subject myself to God alone in this affliction, wherein Absalom thirsts to crush me, especially since he reveals the deliverance prepared for me, and from him alone can I expect it.—*Thomas Le Blanc* (—1669), *in Psalmorum Davidicorum Analysis.*

Verse 1.—"*Is silent.*" The Hebrew word used is דּוֹמִיָּה *dumijah*, that is, silent, resting, expecting, reflecting, solicitous, and observing. For, first, we ought to be subject to God as silent disciples before a master . . . . Whatever God has allowed to happen to me, yet I will be silent before him, and from my heart admire, both enduring his strokes and receiving his teaching. . . . . Secondly, we ought to be subject to God as creatures keeping quiet before their Creator. . . . "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker." Isaiah xlv. 9. Thirdly, we ought to be subject to God as clay in the hands of the potter, ready for the form into which he wishes *to fashion us.* . . . "*As clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.*" Jer. xviii. 6. Fourthly, we ought to be subject to God, as a maid servant to her master, observing his wish, even in the most menial affairs. . . . . Fifthly, we ought to be subject to God, as a wife to her husband (*sponsa sponso*), who in her love is solicitous and careful to do whatever may be pleasing to him. "*My beloved is mine, and I am his.*" Cant. ii. 16. And, "*I am my beloved's.*" Cant. vi. 3.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 1.—After almost every quiet prayer and holy meditation in the divine presence, we have the consciousness that there was an ear which heard us, and a heart which received our sighs. The effect of a silent colloquy with God is so soothing! There was a time when I used greatly to wonder at these words of Luther:—

> "Bear and forbear, and *silent* be,
> Tell to no man thy misery;
> Yield not in trouble to dismay,
> God can deliver any day."

I wondered because we feel the outpouring of grief into the heart of a friend to be so sweet. At the same time, he who talks much of his troubles to *men* is apt to fall into a way of saying too little of them to *God*; while, on the other hand, he who has often experienced the blessed alleviation which flows from silent converse with the Eternal, loses much of his desire for the sympathy of his fellows. It appears to me now as if spreading out our distress *too largely* before men served only to make it broader, and to take away its *zest*; and hence the proverb, "Talking of trouble makes it double." On the contrary, if when in distress we can contrive to maintain calm composure of mind, and to bear it always as in the sight of God, submissively waiting for succour from him, according to the words of the psalmist, "*Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation;*" in that case, the distress neither extends in breadth nor sinks in depth. It lies upon the surface of the heart like the morning mist, which the sun as it ascends dissipates into light clouds.—*Augustus F. Tholuck, in* "*Hours of Christian Devotion,*" 1870.

Verse 1.—The natural mind is ever prone to *reason*, when we ought *to believe*; to be *at work*, when we ought to be *quiet*; to go our own way, when we ought steadily to walk on in God's ways, however trying to nature. . . . And how does it work, when we thus anticipate God, by going our own way? We bring, in many instances, guilt on our conscience; but if not, we certainly weaken faith, instead of increasing it; and each time we work thus a deliverance of our own, we find it more and more difficult to trust in God, till at last we give way entirely to our natural fallen reason, and unbelief prevails. How different if one is enabled to wait God's own time, and to look alone to him for help and deliverance! When at last help comes, after many seasons of prayer it may be, and after much exercise of faith and patience it may be, how sweet

it is, and what a present recompense does the soul at once receive for trusting in God, and waiting patiently for his deliverance! Dear Christian reader, if you have never walked in this path of obedience before, do so now, and you will then know experimentally the sweetness of the joy which results from it. —*George Müller, in "A Narrative of some of the Lord's Dealings."* 1856.

Verse 2.—"*I shall not be greatly moved.*" Grace makes the heart move leisurely to all things except God. A mortified man is as a sea that hath no winds, that ebbs not and flows not. The mortified man sings and is not light, and weeps and is not sad, is zealous in God's cause, and yet composed in spirit; he is not so eager on anything but he can quit it for God. Ah! few can act, but they over act.—*Alexander Carmichael, in "The Believer's Mortification of Sin,"* 1677.

Verse 3:—

"How long will ye assault a man?
How long will ye all crush him,
As though he were a leaning wall—
A fence nearly thrust down?"

French and Skinner.

Verse 3.—"*Against a man.*" That sure is but a poetical expression for *against me, i.e., David*, the speaker, against whom the neighbouring nations raised war, and his own subjects rebellions. Thus doth Christ oft speak of himself under the title of the *Son of Man*, in the third person; and Paul (2 Cor. xii. 2), Οἶδα ἄνθρωπον, "*I knew a man*," *i.e.*, undoubtedly *himself.*—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 3.—"*As a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.*" Christ gave no blow, but merely asked his murderers whom they sought for; and yet they fell flat and prostrate to the ground (John xviii.), so that the wicked persecutors of the godly are aptly and properly likened and compared to a tottering and trembling wall. For as soon as ever the blasts of God's wrath and judgment are moved and kindled against them, they are so quivering and comfortless, that they would take them to be most their friends who would soonest despatch them out of the world; as Christ said aptly of them, they would pray the mountains to fall upon them. Luke xxiii.—*John Hooper.*

Verse 3.—"*As a bowing wall shall ye be.*" In consequence of heavy rains and floods, and unsound foundations, it is very common to see walls much out of perpendicular; and some of them so much so, that it might be thought scarcely possible for them to stand. "Poor old Rāman is very ill, I hear." "Yes, the wall is bowing." "Begone, thou low caste! thou art a *kutte-chiover*," that is, "a ruined wall." "By the oppression of the head-man, the people of that village are like a ruined wall."—*J. Roberts's "Oriental Illustrations."*

Verse 3.—"*A bowing wall.*" A wall, when ill built, bulges out in the centre, presenting the appearance of nearly twice its actual breadth; but, as it is hollow within, it soon falls to ruins. The wicked, in like manner, are dilated with pride, and assume, in their consultations, a most formidable appearance; but David predicts that they would be brought to unexpected and utter destruction, like a wall badly constructed, and hollow in the interior, which falls with a sudden crash, and is broken by its own weight into a thousand pieces.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 4.—"*They only consult*," etc. *Truly* I am he whom if "*they shall consult to cast down from his excellency, they shall delight in a lie, they shall bless with their mouth and curse inwardly.*" That is: what I have said of worldly men, boasting themselves upon a man, falling into ruin, I desire that you should know that the same fate shall never befall me who trust in God; for otherwise does the matter stand.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 4.—"*Excellency.*" Rather, *elevation;* the figure of the preceding verse being followed out.—*Religious Tract Society's Notes.*

Verse 5.—"*My soul, wait thou only upon God.*" They trust not God *at all* who trust him not *alone*. He that stands with one foot on a rock, and another foot upon a quicksand, will sink and perish, as certainly as he that standeth with both feet upon a quicksand. David knew this, and therefore calleth earnestly upon his soul (for his business lay most within doors) to trust only upon God. See verse 1.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 5.—"*My expectation is from him.*" As if he had said, never will he frustrate the patient waiting of his saints; doubtless my silence shall meet with its reward; I shall restrain myself, and not make that false haste which will only retard my deliverance.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 5.—"*My expectation is from him.*" In an account of the voyage of some of the early missionaries who left Hermannsburg for South Africa, is the following incident:—After a long calm, a brother prayed thus to the Lord for favouring wind: "Lord, thou givest them that fear thee the desires of their heart, and dost help them; help us now, that we may no longer be becalmed upon the sea; help us on our journey, thou who ridest on the wings of the wind." He was so joyful over this word of the Lord, that he rose up and said in his heart: "Now I have already that for which I prayed." After the prayer, one of the crew stepped over to the helmsman, and said, half mocking, half in earnest, "So we shall have wind: didn't you hear the prayer? It doesn't look very like it!" So he said, and half an hour after there came so strong a blast that the waves broke over the ship.—*William Fleming Stevenson, in "Praying and Working."* 1862.

Verse 5.—He shifteth much needless labour, and provideth great contentment, who closeth himself with God alone. To deal with man alone, apart from God, is both an endless and fruitless labour. If we have counsel to ask, help or benefit to obtain, or approbation to seek, there is none end with man: for every man we must have sundry reasons and motives; and what pleaseth one will offend twenty: as many heads, as many wits and fancies. No man can give contentment to all, or change himself into so many fashions, as he shall encounter humours; and yet it is more easy to take sundry fashions than to be acceptable in them.—*William Struther.*

Verses 6, 7.—Twice in this Psalm hath he repeated this, in the second and in the sixth verses, "*He is my rock, and my salvation, and my defence,*" and (as it is enlarged in the seventh verse) "*my refuge and my glory.*" If my "*refuge,*" what enemy can pursue me? If my "*defence,*" what temptation shall wound me? If my "*rock,*" what storm shall shake me? If my "*salvation,*" what melancholy shall deject me? If my "*glory,*" what calumny shall defame me?—*John Donne.*

Verses 6, 7.—How quickly the soul of the faithful returns again to the God of its confidence. He spared a moment to admonish the ungodly, but like the dove of Noah he returns to the ark. Observe how the expressions of this holy confidence are repeated, with every pleasing variety of expression, to denote the comfort of his heart. Reader, ask yourself—are such views of Christ your views of him? Do you know him in those covenant characters? Is Jesus your rock, your salvation, your defence?—*Robert Hawker, D.D.*

Verse 7 (*first clause*).—On the shields of the Greeks, Neptune was depicted; on the shields of the Trojans, Minerva; because in them they put their confidence, and in their protection deemed themselves secure. . . . Now, Christ is the insignia of our shields. Often does David say, God is his protector. The Hebrew is *magen;* that is, shield, buckler, as Ps. xviii. 2 & 30.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 7.—There are several names of God given in this verse, that so every soul may take with him that name which may minister most comfort to him

Let him that is pursued by any particular temptation, invest God, as God is *a refuge, a sanctuary;* let him that is buffeted with Satan, battered with his own concupiscence, receive God, as God is his *defence* and *target;* let him that is shaked with perplexities in his understanding, or scruples in his conscience, lay hold on God, as God is his *rock* and his *anchor;* let him that hath any diffident jealousy and suspicion of the free and full mercy of God, apprehend God, as God is his *salvation;* and let him that walks in the ingloriousness and contempt of the world, contemplate God, as God is *glory.* Any of these notions is enough to any man; but God is all these, and all else, that all souls can think, to every man.—*Abraham Wright.*

Verse 8.—"*Trust in him,*" etc. To trust in God is to cast our burden on the Lord, when it is too heavy for our own shoulder (Ps. lv. 22); to dwell "in the secret place of the Most High," when we know not where to lay our heads on earth (Ps. xci. 1); to "look to our Maker," and to "have respect to the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah xvii. 7); to lean on our Beloved (Cant. viii. 5; Isaiah xxxvi. 6); to stay ourselves, when sinking, on the Lord our God (Isaiah xxvi. 3). In a word, trust in God is that high act or exercise of faith whereby the soul, looking upon God and casting itself on his goodness, power, promises, faithfulness, and providence, is lifted up above carnal fears and discouragements; above perplexing doubts and disquietments; either for the obtaining and continuance of that which is good, or for the preventing or removing of that which is evil. . . . . "*Trust in him at all times.*" This holy duty is indeed never out of season; so much the original word for *time*, עת, imports. True, indeed, our Saviour saith, and saith truly, "My time," *i.e.*, my time of discovering myself to be a wonder-working God, "is not yet come." Yea, but *all time* in respect of *trust in God*, is an appointed, yea, and an *accepted* time. The wise man tells us (Eccl. iii. 1), "There is an appointed time for every purpose under heaven:" a time to kill and to heal, to plant and to pluck up, to weep and to laugh, to get and to lose, to be born and to die. In *all* these *trust in God* is not, like snow in harvest, uncomely, but seasonable, yea, necessary. There may be, indeed, a time when God will not be found, but no time wherein he must not be trusted. *Nullum tempus occurrit regi*, saith the law; let me add, *nec fiduciæ*, and it is sound divinity. The time of trusting in God cannot be lapsed. But more expressly. There are some *special* instances and nicks of time for trust. 1. *The time of prosperity;* when we sit under the warm beams of a meridian sun; when we wash our steps in butter and feet in oil; when the candle of the Lord shines on our tabernacle; when "our mountain stands strong:" now, now is the time for trust, but not in our mountain (for it is a mountain of ice and may soon dissolve), but *in our God.* Halcyon days to some are temptations to security, but to saints times for trust. . . . . 2. *The time of adversity.* This also is a seasonable time for trust; when we have no bread to eat, but that of "carefulness;" nor wine to drink, but that of "affliction" and "astonishment;" no, not water either, but that of our "tears." *Now* is a time, not for overgrieving, murmuring, sinking, desponding, but for *trusting.* In a tempest, then, a believer thinks it seasonable to cast anchor upward. Thus did good Jehoshaphat: "O our God; we know not what to do: only *our eyes are unto thee.*" 2 Chron. xx. 12. Thus David: "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." Ps. lvi. 3. Times of trouble are proper times for trust, be the trouble either spiritual or temporal. . . . . "*At all times.*" 1. *Quando:* When must we trust? "At what time?" At all times, *omni hora*, "every hour:" so the Syriac version. As a true friend is to love, so a sound believer is to trust, at all times. Prov. xvii. 17. 2. *Quamdiu:* The duration of this trust: "How long?" "All the day long." Ps. xliv. 8. All our lives long: all the days of their *appointed* time must God's Jobs not only "wait," but "trust," till their change come. Yea, "for ever" (Isaiah xxvi. 4); nay, "for ever and ever." Ps. lii. 8.—*Thomas Lye, M.A.* (1621—1684), *in* "*The Morning Exercises at Cripplegate.*"

Verse 8.—"*Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him.*" According to our love, so is our faith and trust in God; and according to our trust, such is our freedom at the throne of grace. Trust in him, and pour out your hearts before him; pour them out, like water, in joyful tears. For when the stone in the heart is melted by mercy, the eyes will issue like a fountain of tears. Good men have melting spirits. It is a branch of the covenant and a fruit of the effusion of the Spirit of grace. It is asserted by the learned in chemistry that no menstruums are so powerful as sulphureous and oily liquors to melt down the hardest minerals; to be sure there is nothing like the oil of mercy, so potent a solvent for an iron heart.—*Samuel Lee.*

Verse 8.—"*At all times.*" I might mention many times in which we might trust in the Lord, but they are comprised in this little word "*all*," and a precious word it is: "Trust in him at *all* times." When you are full of fears, then you shall bring the little word "*all*" unto him, and say, I have nothing to encourage me to come to thee but that precious little word, "*all.*"—*John Berridge.*

Verse 8.—"*Pour out your heart.*" The word "*pour*" plainly signifies that the heart is full of grief, and almost afraid to empty itself before the Lord. What does he say to you? "Come and pour out all your trouble before me." He is never weary with hearing the complaints of his people; therefore you should go and keep nothing back; tell him everything that hurts you, and pour "all your complaints into his merciful bosom. That is a precious word: "*Pour out your heart before him.*" Make him your counsellor and friend; you cannot please him better than when your hearts rely wholly upon him. You may tell him, if you please, you have been so foolish as to look to this friend and the other for relief, and found none; and you now come to him, who commands you, to "*pour out your heart before him.*"—*John Berridge.*

Verse 8.—"*Pour out your heart.*" Pour it out as water. Not as milk, whose colour remains. Not as wine, whose savour remains. Not as honey, whose taste remains. But as water, of which, when it is poured out, nothing remains. So let sin be poured out of the heart, that no colour of it may remain in external marks, no savour in our words, no taste in our affections. "I will cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the Lord." Isaiah xiv. 22. Thus Hugo. But if you fear lest there remain anything in your heart not poured forth, bring the whole heart, and cast it before the eyes of the Lord, and sacrifice it to him, that he may create a new heart in thee.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 9.—Other doctrines, moral or civil instructions, may be deliverd to us possibly, and probably, and likely, and credibly, and under the like terms and modifications, but this in our text, is assuredly, undoubtedly, undeniably, irrefragably. "*Surely men of low degree,*" etc. For howsoever when they two are compared together with one another, it may admit discourse and disputation, whether men of high degree, or of low degree, do most violate the laws of God; that is, whether prosperity or adversity make men most obnoxious to sin; yet, when they come to be compared, not with one another, but both with God, this asseveration, this "*surely*" reaches to both: "*Surely men of low degree are vanity*, and, as *surely*, *men of high degree are a lie.*" And though this may seem to leave room for men of middle ranks, and fortunes, and places, that there is a mediocrity that might give an assurance, and an establishment, yet there is no such thing in this case; for (*as surely* still) "*to be laid in the balance, they are all*" (not all of low, and all of high degree, all rich, and all poor), but all, of all conditions, "*altogether lighter than vanity.*" Now, all this doth destroy, not extinguish, not annihilate, that affection in man, of hope and trust, and confidence in anything; but it rectifies that hope, and trust, and confidence, and directs it upon the right object. Trust not in flesh, but in spiritual things, that we neither bend our hope downward, to infernal spirits, to seek help in witches; nor miscarry it upward, to seek it in saints or angels, but fix it in him who is nearer us than our own souls—our blessed, and

gracious, and powerful God, who in this one Psalm is presented unto us by so many names of assurance and confidence: "*my expectation, my salvation, my rock, my defence, my glory, my strength, my refuge*," and the rest. . . .

. . . "*Men of high degree are a lie.*" The Holy Ghost hath been pleased to vary the phrase here, and to call "*men of high degree*" not "*vanity*," but "*a lie;*" because the poor, men of low degree, in their condition promise no assistance, feed not men with hope, and therefore cannot be said *to lie;* but in the condition of men of high degree, who are of power, there is a tacit promise, a natural and inherent assurance of protection and assistance flowing from them. For the magistrate cannot say that he never promised me justice, never promised me protection; for in his assuming that place, he made me that promise. I cannot say that I never promised my parish my service; for in my induction I made them that promise, and if I perform it not I am *a lie:* for so this word *chasab* (which we translate *a lie*) is frequently used in the Scriptures, for that which is defective in the duty it should perform: "Thou shalt be a spring of water" (says God in Isaiah), *cujus aquæ non mentiuntur*, "whose waters never lie;" that is, never dry, never fail. So, then, when men of high degree do not perform the duties of their places, then they are a lie of their own making; and when I over-magnify them in their place, flatter them, humour them, ascribe more to them, expect more from them, rely more upon them than I should, then they are a lie of my making. . . . . .

. . . "*To be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.*" Vanity is nothing, but there is a condition worse than nothing. Confidence in the things or persons of this world, but most of all a confidence in ourselves, will bring us at last to that state wherein we would fain be nothing, and cannot. But yet we have a "*balance*" in our text; and all these are but put together in one balance. In the other scale there is something put too, in comparison whereof all this world is so light. God does not leave our great and noble faculty and affection of hope, and trust, and confidence without something to direct itself upon, and rectify itself in. He does not; for, for that he proposes himself. The words immediately before the text are, God "*is a refuge;*" and, in comparison of him, "*To be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.*"—*John Donne.*

Verse 9.—"*Surely men of low degree are vanity.*"

"Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,
Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain!
Vain as the leaf upon the stream,
And fickle as a changeful dream;
Fantastic as a woman's mood,
And fierce as Frenzy's fevered blood,
Thou many-headed monster thing,
O, who would wish to be thy king!"

Walter Scott (1771—1832).

Verse 9.—"*Surely men of low degree are vanity*," etc. Or, *sons of Adam;* of the earthly man; of fallen Adam; one of his immediate sons was called Hebel, *vanity;* and it is true of all his sons, but here it designs only one sort of them; such as are poor and low in the world; mean men, as the phrase is rendered in Isaiah ii. 9; these are subject to sinful vanity; their thoughts are vain, their affections vain, their minds vain, their conversation vain, sinful, foolish, fallacious, and inconstant.—*John Gill.*

Verse 9.—"*Men . . . . are a lie.*" An active lie—they deceive others, and a passive lie—they are deceived by others; and they who are most actively a lie, are most usually and most deservedly a passive lie, or fed with lies.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 9.—"*Lighter than vanity.*"—If there were any one among men immortal, not liable to sin, or change, whom it were impossible for any one to overcome, but who was strong as an angel, such a one might be something; but inasmuch as every one is a man, a sinner, mortal, weak, liable to sickness

and death, exposed to pain and terror, like Pharaoh, even from the most insignificant animals, and liable to so many miseries that it is impossible to count them, the conclusion must be a valid one: "Man is nothing."—*Arndt.*

Verse 10.—"*Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery.*" Now this robbery and wrong is done two manner of ways—to God and to man. He that putteth his trust for salvation in any other, save in God, loses not only his salvation, but also robs God of his glory, and does God manifest wrong, as much as lieth in him; as the wicked people amongst the Jews did, who said as long as they honoured and trusted unto the queen of heaven, all things prospered with them; but when they hearkened to the true preachers of God's word, all things came into a worse state, and they were overwhelmed with scarcity and trouble. Hosea ii.; Jeremiah xliv. He also that puts his trust and confidence in any learning or doctrine beside God's word, not only falls into error and loses the truth; but also, as much as lies in him, he robs God's book of his sufficient truth and verity, and ascribes it to the book of men's decrees; which is as much wrong to God and his book as may be thought or done. In which robbery, or rather sacrilege, no man should put his trust, as the prophet saith.—*John Hooper.*

Verse 10.—"*Become not vain in robbery.*" What? would he have them serious in robbery? No; the meaning is this: do not trust in a thing of nought; if you rob, oppress, deceive, or wrong others, you trust to a vain thing—in a thing that is not—in a thing that will never do you good: there will be no tack, no hold in anything got in such a manner. When you think to get riches by wrong dealing, or closely circumventing others, you "*become vain in robbery.*"—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 10.—"*If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.*" We naturally love riches, and therefore as naturally spend many thoughts, both how to get and how to keep them. If a man have riches, or an increase of riches, it is not unlawful for him to think of them (yet we should be as sparing of our thoughts that way as may be, our thoughts and the bent of our souls should always be upon God), but that which the psalmist forbids is the settling of our hearts; as if he had said, Let not your thoughts stay or dwell here. Riches are themselves transient things, therefore they should have but our transient thoughts. "*Set not your hearts upon them,*" for they may quickly be unsettled. Samuel bespake Saul in the same language about a worldly concernment, when he went out to seek his father's asses: "Set not thy mind on them." 1 Sam. ix. 20. 'Tis like Saul was overburdened with this thought, "What's become of, or what shall I do for, my father's asses?" "Be not solicitous about them," saith Samuel, "greater things are towards thee."—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 10.—"*If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.*" Consider what is here meant by "riches." Indeed, some may imagine that it is hardly possible to mistake the meaning of this common word. Yet, in truth, there are thousands in this mistake; and many of them quite innocently. A person of note hearing a sermon preached upon this subject several years since, between surprise and indignation, broke out aloud, "Why does he talk about riches here? There is no rich man at Whitehaven, but Sir James L———r." And it is true there was none but he that had forty thousand pounds a year, and some millions in ready money. But a man may be rich that has not a hundred a year—not even one thousand pounds in cash. Whosoever has food to eat, and raiment to put on, with something over, is rich. Whoever has the necessaries and conveniences of life for himself and his family, and a little to spare for them that have not, is properly a rich man; unless he is a miser, a lover of money, one that hoards up what he can and ought to give to the poor. For if so, he is a poor man still, though he has millions in the bank; yea, he is the poorest of men; for

> "The beggars but a common lot deplore
> The rich poor man's emphatically poor."

. . . . . O! who can convince a rich man that he sets his heart upon riches? For considerably above half a century I have spoken on this head, with all the plainness that was in my power. But with how little effect! I doubt whether I have in all that time convinced fifty misers of covetousness. When the lover of money was described ever so clearly, and painted in the strongest colours, who applied it to himself? To whom did God and all that knew him say, "Thou art the man?" If he speaks to any of you that are present, O do not stop your ears! Rather say, with Zaccheus, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have done any wrong to any man, I restore him fourfold." He did not mean that he had done this in time past; but that he determined to do so for the time to come. I charge thee before God, thou lover of money, to "go and do likewise!"

I have a message from God unto thee, O rich man! whether thou wilt hear or whether thou wilt forbear. Riches have increased with thee; at the peril of thy soul, "set not thine heart upon them!" Be thankful to him that gave thee such a talent, so much power of doing good. Yet dare not rejoice over them but with fear and trembling. *Cave ne inhæreas*, says pious Kempis, *ne capiaris et pereas;* "Beware thou cleave not unto them, lest thou be entangled and perish." Do not make them thy end, thy chief delight, thy happiness, thy god! See that thou expect not happiness in money, nor anything that is purchasable thereby; in gratifying either the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, or the pride of life.—*John Wesley's Sermon "On the Danger of Increasing Riches."*

Verse 10.—"*If riches increase*," etc.—"The lust of riches," says Valerian, "stirs with its stimulus the hearts of men, as oxen perpetually plough the soil." Hugo, on Isaiah, says: "The more deeply riches are sown in the heart through love, the more deeply will they pierce through grief."—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 10.—"*If riches increase*" (יִנּוב)—*lit.*, "sprout up" *of their own accord*, as distinguished from riches acquired by "oppression" and "robbery"—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 10.—Riches have in them uncertainty and deceitfulness. Riches have never been true to those that trusted in them, but ever have proved "a lie in their right hand." Isaiah xliv. 20. Hence they are called "lying vanities," Jonah ii. 8; and compared to a flock of birds sitting upon a man's ground, which upon the least fright, take wing and fly away. Riches have "wings," saith Solomon; and rather than want they will "*make* to themselves wings." Prov. xxiii. 5. Yea, though they have not the wings so much as of a little sparrow, wherewith to fly to you; yet will they make to themselves the large wings of a great eagle, wherewith to fly from you. Oh, how many have riches served as Absalom's mule served her master, whom she lurched, and left, in his greatest need, hanging betwixt heaven and earth, as if rejected of both! A spark of fire may set them on flying, a thief may steal them, a wicked servant may embezzle and purloin them, a pirate or shipwreck at sea, a robber or bad debtor at land; yea, an hundred ways sets them packing. They are as the apples of Sodom, that look fair yet crumble away with the least touch—golden delusions, a mere mathematical scheme or fancy of man's brain, 1 Cor. vii. 31; the semblances and empty show of good without any reality or solid consistency: *nec vera, nec vestra*; as they are slippery upon the account of verity, so they are no less in respect of prosperity and possession, for they are winged birds, especially in this, that they fly from man to man (as the birds do from tree to tree), and always from the owner of them. This is a sore deceit and cosenage, yet your heart is more deceitful, inasmuch as it will deceive you with these deceitful riches, *a quo aliquid tale est, illud est magis tale;* they are so, because the heart is so.—*Christopher Love* (1618—1651), *in "A Chrystal Mirrour, or Christian Looking-glass,"* 1679.

Verse 10.—"*Set not your heart upon them.*" The word שִׁית properly is *to place*, to arrange in a fixed firm order, is specially used of the foundation stones of a building being placed fitly and firmly together . . . Therefore

to set the heart upon riches is, to fix the mind closely and firmly upon them, to give it wholly up to them with all its powers; at the same time to be puffed up with confidence and arrogance, as Cl. Schultens observes.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verses 10—13.—Our estimate of man depends upon our estimate of God. David knows that men of low and high degree, if separated from the primal fount of every good, weigh *nothing*, and are less than nothing. Riches are nothing, especially ill-gotten ones. Man is not to get proud when riches increase. But such is the course of things, that in proportion as the gifts of God are rich, men confide more in the gifts than in the rich giver. But holy David is better instructed. Once and again he has heard the divine voice in his soul, "that power belongeth unto God only." Job. xxxiii. 14. This powerful God is merciful: can then any merit attach to our poor works? and yet the Lord rendereth to every pious man according to his imperfect pious work.—*Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 11.—"*God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this.*" Nothing is able to settle our confidence in God, but the powerful impression of his own word. "*Twice have I heard this; that power*," etc. How did he hear this "*twice?*" Once from the voice of *creation*, and again from the voice of *government*. *Mercy* was heard in government after man had sinned, not in creation: but we have heard of the power of God twice; once we heard of it in creation, and again more gloriously in the work of redemption, wherein his power and mercy were linked together. Or, "*Twice have I heard this; that power*," etc.; that is, it is a most certain and undoubted truth, that *power* is essential to the divine nature. The repetition of a thing confirms the certainty of it. *Mercy* is also essential; but power is more apparently so, because no act of *mercy* can be exercised without *power*. Or, though God spake this but *once*, yet David heard it *twice*, or often: that is, he thoroughly weighed and considered it as God's *once* speaking. In this sense a gracious person hears that *twice* that God speaks but *once*. Or, *twice*, that is, frequently; because what God had *once* spoken, had been often repeated and inculcated, and often cleared and confirmed to him by repeated experimental evidence of the certainty thereof; and he had thereupon received the same more and more heartily, and had taken deeper impressions of it by repeated and inculcated thoughts.—*William Wisheart* (1657—1727), *in* "*Theologia; or, Discourses of God.*"

Verse 11.—"*God hath spoken once*," etc. He made it known irrevocably and with great solemnity, so that it was not necessary to repeat it. With the Romans anything is said to be done *once*, which there is either no need to repeat, or which has no return. With the Hebrews also, and Orientals, פַּעַם is *at one turn*, as in 1 Sam. xxvi. 8: "*Now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth* AT ONE TURN, and I will not *smite him the second time.*" See Schultens. So also Ps. lxxxix. 35. "ONCE *have I sworn in my holiness, I will not lie unto David.*" But what is the force of *to hear twice?* It may be taken in various ways. *To hear twice* can be regarded in the general sense of *frequently* or often. This will give the meaning:—God has but once spoken, yet I have often observed in my experience that his declaration is true.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 11.—"*Once; yea twice.*" This is answerable to the phrase of the Latins, *Semel atque iterum;* and it is usual in all writers to use a certain number for an uncertain, and particularly among poets: *Felice ter et amplius. Horace.—John Tillotson*, 1630—1694.

Verse 11.—"*Twice have I heard*," etc. There are several renderings and interpretations of these words; but that which to me seems most intended by our rendering is, I heard what was once spoken twice at once; that is, I heard it speedily, and I heard it believingly: as soon as ever the word came to me I received it, and I received it not only with my ear, but with my heart. That is a blessed way of hearing; and they who hear so, at first speaking, may well be said to hear that *twice* which God speaketh once. *Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 11.—"*Power belongeth unto God.*" Believe the mighty power of God. Consider (1). It is difficult to believe his power. But how can that be? Is not this a piece of natural divinity, that God is almighty? What need is there, then, to press people to believe it? Great need; because this is the great thing we are apt to question in cases of difficulty. Else, why do we pray with cheerfulness when we see great probability of a thing, but faint in prayer when it is otherwise? And why do we cry out, in sad times, "Oh, we shall never see good days again?" (2.) The firm belief of God's power is of great concern and moment in religion. Faith is never quite laid by till the soul questions the power of God. "Oh, he cannot pardon, he cannot save!" When it cometh to this, the soul is no longer able to hold out. So that the life and vigour of faith is very much concerned in the belief of God's power. It is, indeed, one of the first steps to all religion. Therefore it is put in the front of our creed: "I believe in God, the Father ALMIGHTY;" and he that believes that first article will the more easily believe all the rest. (3.) God is much displeased, even with his own children, when his power is questioned by them. For this God takes up Moses short: "Is the Lord's hand waxed short?" (Numb. xi. 23); as if he had said: "What, Moses, dost thou think that my power is exhausted or weakened? What an unworthy conceit is this!" For this also Christ rebuked Martha very sharply: "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" John xi. 40. Yea, God is so tender of the glory of his power, that he hath sharply chastened his dear children when their faith staggered in this matter; as we see in Zacharias, who, for questioning the power of God, was immediately stricken dumb upon the place. Well, then, let it be your great care to have your faith confirmed in the belief of God's almighty power. For this end, ponder the verbal declarations made of it in the Holy Scriptures; consider and improve the manifestations he hath given of it, both in your own and former times; and pray much that God would strengthen and increase your faith.—*William Wisheart.*

Verses 11, 12.—Except some of the ancient versions, almost every version, translation, and commentary, says Dr. A. Clarke, have missed the sense and meaning of this verse. Of the former verse the Doctor offers the following translation: "Once hath God spoken; these two things have I heard." But what are the two things the Psalmist had heard? 1. כִּי עֹז לֵאלֹהִים, "*That strength is the Lord's;*" that is, he is the origin of power. 2. וְלְךָ אֲדֹנָי חָסֶד, "*and to thee, Lord, is mercy;*" that is, *he is the fountain of mercy.* These, then, are the *two* grand truths that the *law*, yea, the whole *revelation* of God, declares through every page. He is the *Almighty*—he is the *Most Merciful;* and hence the *inference*, the powerful, just, and holy God, the most merciful and compassionate Lord, *will* by-and-by *judge the world*, and *will render to man according to his works.* How this beautiful meaning, adds the Doctor, should have been unseen by almost every interpreter is hard to say; but these verses contain one of the most instructive truths in the Bible.—*William Carpenter, in "An Explanation of Scripture Difficulties."* 1828.

Verses 11, 12.—I confess I wonder to find so constantly in Scripture that the inspired writers put "merciful" and "mighty," "terrible" and "great," all together: you shall find it so. Neh. i. 5 "O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy," etc. You have it also in Dan. ix. 4, in his solemn prayer. "O Lord," says he, "the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy," etc. Thus mercy, and great, and terrible are constantly joined together.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 12.—"*Also unto thee, O Lord belongeth mercy.*" Something more is necessary to invite us to a dependence on God than his bare "*power*" and ability to help us. There must be also a firm persuasion of the promptitude and readiness of his will to do what he is able; and this we have in the other attribute of his "*mercy.*" . . . . "Unto thee," unto thee *alone*, and unto none else. The tenderest mercy amongst the creatures is none at all, being compared

with the divine mercy. It belongeth "*unto thee*," as thy prerogative and peculiar excellency. Mercy is a peculiar jewel of his crown. Or, *thine, O Lord, is mercy*. Nothing amongst the creature deserves the name of mercy but his own. Nothing is worthy to be so called, but what is proper and peculiar to God. Or, *with thee is mercy*, as it is expressed elsewhere. Psalm cxxx. 4, 7. It is *with him*; that is, it is inseparable from his nature. He is merciful in a way peculiar to himself, "the Father of mercies." 2 Cor. i. 3.—*William Wisheart.*

Verse 12.—"*For thou renderest to every man according to his work;*" namely—judgment to the wicked, and mercy to the righteous; where the Syriac interpreter giveth the good note: *Est gratia Dei ut reddat homini secunda opera bona, quia merces bonorum operum est ex gratia:* It is mercy in God to set his love on them that keep his commandments. Exod. xx. 6.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 12.—"*Thou renderest to every man according to his work.*" Learn to admire the grace of God in rewarding your works. It is much that he accepts them; and what is it, then, that he rewards them? It is much that he doth not damn you for them, seeing they are all defiled, and have something of sin cleaving to them; and what is it, then, that he crowns them? You would admire the bounty and munificence of a man that should give you a kingdom for taking up a straw at his foot, or give you a hundred thousand pounds for paying him a penny rent you owed him: how, then, should you adore the rich grace and transcendent bounty of God in so largely recompensing such mean services, in setting a crown of glory upon your heads, as the reward of those works which you can scarcely find in your hearts to call good ones! You will even blush one day to see yourselves so much honoured for what you are ashamed of, and are conscious to yourselves that you have deserved nothing by. You will wonder then to see God recompensing you for doing what was your duty to do, and what was his work in you: giving you grace, and crowning that grace: enabling you to do things acceptable to him, and then rewarding you as having done them.—*Edward Veal* (—1708), in "*The Morning Exercises.*"

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—I. *What* he did? "Waited upon God." Believed, was patient, was silent in resignation, was obedient. II. To whom he did it? To his God, who is true, a sovereign, gracious, etc. III. How he did it? With his soul, truly, and only. IV. What came of it? Salvation present, perceived, observed, etc.

Verse 2.—"*God a rock.*" David speaks of him as high and strong, and as a rock to stand upon, a rock of defence and refuge, a rock of habitation (Psalm lxxi. 3, in Hebrew), and a rock to be praised. Ps. xcv. 1. See the Concordance for many hints.

["*Christ the Rock:*" *a Sermon on* 1 *Cor. x.* 4. By Hallett Edmonds, in "*Christ All and In All.*"]

Verse 2 (*first clause*).—See "SPURGEON'S *Sermons*," No. 30, "*God alone the Salvation of His People.*"

Verses 2 & 6.—"*I shall not be greatly moved.*" "*I shall not be moved.*" Growth in faith. How it is produced, preserved, and evidenced.

Verse 4.—Wherein lies a believer's excellency? Who would cast him down, and why, and how they seek to do it?

Verse 4.—"*They delight in lies.*" Those who invent them, or spread them, or laugh at them, or readily believe them. Romanists, self-righteous persons, the presumptuous, persecutors, zealous errorists, etc.

Verse 5 (*first clause*).—See "SPURGEON'S *Sermons*," No. 144, "*Waiting only upon God.*"

Verse 5 (*second clause*).—Great expectations from a great God; because of great promises, great provisions, and great foretastes.

Verse 5 (*last clause*).—What we expect from God, and why and when?

Verse 8 (*first clause*).—How are we to live by faith on divine providence?—*T. Lye's Sermon in "Morning Exercises."*

Verse 8 (*first clause*).—All trust, from all saints, at all times.

Verse 8 (*first clause*).—Times when this exhortation is most needed. Times of prosperity, of desertion by friends, of calumny, of poverty, of conscious sin, of chastisement, of death.

Verse 8.—"*Pour out your hearts.*" This teacheth us to deal plainly with God in laying open our hearts before him; and then, no doubt, we shall find ease.—*Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 8 (*last clause*).—The peculiar security of the peculiar people.

Verse 10.—Evils usually connected with the love of riches. Idolatry, covetousness, carking care, meanness, forgetfulness of God and spiritual truth, neglect of charity, hardness of heart, tendency to injustice, etc. Means for escaping this seductive sin.

Verse 11.—I. How God speaks. "*Once*," plainly, powerfully, immutably, etc. II. How we should hear. "*Twice*," continually, in heart as well as ear, observantly in practice, in spirit as well as in letter.

Verses 11 & 12.—The constant union of power and mercy in the language of Scripture.

WORKS UPON THE SIXTY-SECOND PSALM.

"*An Exposition upon some Select Psalmes of David. Conteining great store of most excellent and comfortable doctrine and instruction for all those that (under the burthen of sinne), thirst for comfort in Christ Jesus.* Written by that faithfull servant of God, M. Robert Rollok, sometime pastour in the Church of Edinburgh: and translated out of Latine into English, by C [harles] L [umisden], Minister of the gospel of Christ at Dudingstoun. . . . 1600." [Contains an Exposition of Psalm LXII.]

"*Certain Comfortable Expositions of the constant Martyr of Christ, John Hooper, bishop of Gloucester and Worcester.* Written in the time of his tribulation and imprisonment, upon the Twenty-third, Sixty-second, Seventy-third, and Seventy-seventh Psalms of the prophet David."

PSALM LXIII.

TITLE.—A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.—*This was probably written while David was fleeing from Absalom; certainly at the time he wrote it he was king (verse 11), and hard pressed by those who sought his life. David did not leave off singing because he was in the wilderness, neither did he in slovenly idleness go on repeating Psalms intended for other occasions; but he carefully made his worship suitable to his circumstances, and presented to his God a wilderness hymn when he was in the wilderness. There was no desert in his heart, though there was a desert around him. We too may expect to be cast into rough places ere we go hence. In such seasons, may the Eternal Comforter abide with us, and cause us to bless the Lord at all times, making even the solitary place to become a temple for Jehovah.*

*The distinguishing word of this Psalm is "*EARLY." *When the bed is softest we are most tempted to rise at lazy hours; but when comfort is gone, and the couch is hard, if we rise the earlier to seek the Lord, we have much for which to thank the wilderness.*

DIVISION.—*In the first eight verses the writer expresses his holy desires after God, and his confidence in him, and then in the remaining three verses he prophesies the overthrow of all his enemies. The Psalm is peculiarly suitable for the bed of sickness, or in any constrained absence from public worship.*

EXPOSITION.

O GOD, thou *art* my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

2 To see thy power and thy glory, so *as* I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

3 Because thy lovingkindness *is* better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

4 Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.

5 My soul shall be satisfied as *with* marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise *thee* with joyful lips:

6 When I remember thee upon my bed, *and* meditate on thee in the *night* watches.

7 Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.

8 My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.

1. "*O God, thou art my God;*" or, O God, thou art my Mighty One. The last Psalm left the echo of *power* ringing in the ear, and it is here remembered. Strong affiance bids the restive poet confess his allegiance to the only living God; and firm faith enables him to claim Jehovah as his own. He has no doubts about his possession of his God; and why should other believers have any? The straightforward, clear language of this opening sentence would be far more becoming in Christians than the timorous and doubtful expressions so usual among professors. How sweet is such language! Is there any other word comparable to it for delights? *Meus Deus.* Can angels say more? "*Early*

will I seek thee." Possession breeds desire. Full assurance is no hindrance to diligence, but is the mainspring of it. How can I seek another man's God? but it is with ardent desire that I seek after him whom I know to be my own. Observe the eagerness implied in the time mentioned; he will not wait for noon or the cool eventide; he is up at cockcrowing to meet his God. Communion with God is so sweet that the chill of the morning is forgotten, and the luxury of the couch is despised. The morning is the time for dew and freshness, and the psalmist consecrates it to prayer and devout fellowship. The best of men have been betimes on their knees. The word "*early*" has not only the sense of early in the morning, but that of eagerness, immediateness. He who truly longs for God longs for him now. Holy desires are among the most powerful influences that stir our inner nature; hence the next sentence, "*My soul thirsteth for thee.*" Thirst is an insatiable longing after that which is one of the most essential supports of life; there is no reasoning with it, no forgetting it, no despising it, no overcoming it by stoical indifference. Thirst will be heard; the whole man must yield to its power: even thus is it with that divine desire which the grace of God creates in regenerate men; only God himself can satisfy the craving of a soul really aroused by the Holy Spirit. "*My flesh longeth for thee;*" by the two words "*soul*" and "*flesh*," he denotes the whole of his being. "The *flesh*," in the New Testament sense of it, never longs after the Lord, but rather it lusteth against the spirit; David only refers to that sympathy which is sometimes created in our bodily frame by vehement emotions of the soul. Our corporeal nature usually tugs in the other direction, but the spirit when ardent can compel it to throw in what power it has upon the other side. When the wilderness caused David weariness, discomfort, and thirst, his flesh cried out in unison with the desire of his soul. "*In a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.*" A weary place and a weary heart make the presence of God the more desirable: if there be nothing below and nothing within to cheer, it is a thousand mercies that we may look up and find all we need. How frequently have believers traversed in their experience this "*dry and thirsty land*," where spiritual joys are things forgotten! and how truly can they testify that the only true necessity of that country is the near presence of their God! The absence of outward comforts can be borne with serenity when we walk with God; and the most lavish multiplication of them avails not when he withdraws. Only after God, therefore, let us pant. Let all desires be gathered into one. Seeking first the kingdom of God—all else shall be added unto us.

2. "*To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.*" He longed not so much to see the sanctuary as to see his God; he looked through the veil of ceremonies to the invisible One. Often had his heart been gladdened by communion with God in the outward ordinances, and for this great blessing he sighs again; as well he might, for it is the weightiest of all earth's sorrows for a Christian man to lose the conscious presence of his covenant God. He remembers and mentions the two attributes which had most impressed themselves on his mind when he had been rapt in adoration in the holy place; upon these his mind had dwelt in the preceding Psalm, and the savour of that contemplation is evidently upon his heart when in the wilderness: these he desires to behold again in the place of his banishment. It is a precious thought that the divine power and glory are not confined in their manifestation to any places or localities; they are to be heard above the roaring of the sea, seen amid the glare of the tempest, felt in the forest and the prairie, and enjoyed wherever there is a heart that longs and thirsts to behold them. Our misery is that we thirst so little for these sublime things, and so much for the mocking trifles of time and sense. We are in very truth always in a weary land, for this is not our rest; and it is marvellous that believers do not more continuously thirst after their portion far beyond the river where they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; but shall see the face of their God, and his name shall be in their foreheads. David did not thirst for water or any earthly thing, but only for spiritual manifestations. The sight of

God was enough for him, but nothing short of that would content him. How great a friend is he, the very sight of whom is consolation. Oh, my soul, imitate the psalmist, and let all thy desires ascend towards the highest good; longing here to see God, and having no higher joy even for eternity.

3. "*Because thy lovingkindness is better than life.*" A reason for that which went before, as well as for that which follows. Life is dear, but God's love is dearer. To dwell with God is better than life at its best; life at ease, in a palace, in health, in honour, in wealth, in pleasure; yea, a thousand lives are not equal to the one life which abides in Jehovah's smile. "In him we truly live, and move, and have our being; the withdrawal of the light of his countenance is as the shadow of death to us: hence we cannot but long after the Lord's gracious appearing. Life is to many men a doubtful good; lovingkindness is an unquestioned boon: life is but transient, mercy is everlasting: life is shared in by the lowest animals, but the lovingkindness of the Lord is the peculiar portion of the chosen. "*My lips shall praise thee.*" Openly, so that thy glory shall be made known, I will tell of thy goodness. Even when our heart is rather desiring than enjoying we should still continue to magnify the Most High, for his love is truly precious; even if we do not personally, for the time being, happen to be rejoicing in it. We ought not to make our praises of God to depend upon our own personal and present reception of benefits; this would be mere selfishness: even publicans and sinners have a good word for those whose hands are enriching them with gifts; it is the true believer only who will bless the Lord when he takes away his gifts or hides his face.

4. "*Thus will I bless thee while I live.*" As I now bless thee so will I ever do; or rather, *so* as thou shalt reveal thy lovingkindness to me, I will in return continue to extol thee. While we live we will love. If we see no cause to rejoice in our estate, we shall always have reason for rejoicing in the Lord. If none others bless God, yet his people will; his very nature, as being the infinitely good God, is a sufficient argument for our praising him as long as we exist. "*I will lift up my hands in thy name.*" For worship the hands were uplifted as signs of joy, of veneration, of earnest desire, of confession; in all these senses we would lift up our hands in Jehovah's name alone. No hands need hang down when God draws near in love. The name of Jesus has often made lame men leap as a hart, and it has made sad men clap their hands for joy.

5. "*My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness.*" Though unable to feast on the sacrifice at thine altar, my soul shall even here be filled with spiritual joys, and shall possess a complete, a double contentment. There is in the love of God a fullness, a completeness, a richness of satisfying joy, comparable to the richest food with which the body can be nourished. The Hebrews were more fond of fat than we are, and their highest idea of festive provision is embodied in the two words, "*marrow and fatness:*" a soul hopeful in God and full of his favour is thus represented as feeding upon the best of the best, the dainties of a royal banquet. "*My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.*" More joy, more praise. When the mouth is full of mercy, it should be also full of thanksgiving. When God gives us the marrow of his love, we must present to him the marrow of our hearts. Vocal praise should be rendered to God as well as mental adoration; others see our mercies, let them also hear our thanks.

6. "*When I remember thee upon my bed.*" Lying awake, the good man betook himself to meditation, and then began to sing. He had a feast in the night, and a song in the night. He found holy employment for his thoughts, he consecrated his pillow, his praise anticipated the place of which it is written, "There shall be no night there." Perhaps he could not sleep, and if so, all the more reason for improving the hours of wakefulness. If we are tempted to forget God, it is well that night's quiet should lead us to remember him. We see best in the dark if we there see God best. "*And meditate on thee in the night watches.*" Keeping up sacred worship in my heart as the

priests and Levites celebrated it in the sanctuary. Perhaps David had formerly united with those "who by night stand in the house of the Lord," and now as he could not be with them in person, he remembers the hours as they pass, and unites with the choristers in spirit, blessing Jehovah as they did. It may be, moreover, that the king heard the voices of the sentries as they relieved guard, and each time he returned with renewed solemnity to his meditations upon his God. Night is congenial, in its silence and darkness, to a soul which would forget the world, and rise into a higher sphere. Absorption in the most hallowed of all themes makes watches, which else would be weary, glide away all too rapidly; it causes the lonely and hard couch to yield the most delightful repose—repose more restful than even sleep itself. We read of beds of ivory, but beds of piety are better far. Some revel in the night, but they are not a tithe so happy as those who meditate in God.

7. "*Because thou hast been my help.*" Meditation had refreshed his memory and recalled to him his past deliverances. It were well if we oftener read our own diaries, especially noting the hand of the Lord in helping us in suffering, want, labour, or dilemma. This is the grand use of memory, to furnish us with proofs of the Lord's faithfulness, and lead us onward to a growing confidence in him. "*Therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.*" The very shade of God is sweet to a believer. Under the eagle wings of Jehovah we hide from all fear, and we do this naturally and at once, because we have aforetime tried and proved both his love and his power. We are not only safe, but happy in God; we "*rejoice*" as well as repose.

8. "*My soul followeth hard after thee,*" or is glued to thee. We follow close at the Lord's heel, because we are one with him. Who shall divide us from his love? If we cannot walk with him with equal footsteps, we will at least follow after with all the strength he lends us, earnestly panting to reach him and abide in his fellowship. When professors follow hard after the world, they will fall into the ditch; but none are ever too eager after communion with the Lord. "*Thy right hand upholdeth me.*" Else he would not have followed the Lord with constancy, or even have longed after him. The divine power, which has so often been dwelt upon in this and the preceding Psalms, is here mentioned as the source of man's attachment to God. How strong are we when the Lord works in us by his own right hand, and how utterly helpless if he withhold his aid!

9 But those *that* seek my soul, to destroy *it,* shall go into the lower parts of the earth.

10 They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes.

11 But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

9. As David earnestly sought for God, so there were men of another order who as eagerly sought after his blood; of these he speaks: "*But those that seek my soul, to destroy it.*" At his life they aimed, at his honour, his best welfare; and this they would not merely injure but utterly ruin. The devil is a destroyer, and all his seed are greedy to do the same mischief; and as he has ruined himself by his crafty devices, so also shall they. Destroyers shall be destroyed. Those who hunt souls shall be themselves the victims. "*Shall go into the lower parts of the earth.*" Into the pits which they digged for others they shall fall themselves. The slayers shall be slain, and the grave shall cover them. The hell which they in their curse invoked for others, shall shut its mouth upon them. Every blow aimed against the godly will recoil on the persecutor; he who smites a believer drives a nail in his own coffin.

10. "*They shall fall by the sword.*" So David's enemies did. They thus

take the sword shall perish with the sword; bloody men shall feel their own life-gushing forth from them, when their evil day shall at last come, and they shall be given up to feel in their own persons the horrors of death. "*They shall be a portion for foxes.*" Too mean to be fit food for the lions, the foxes shall sniff around their corpses, and the jackals shall hold carnival over their carcasses. Unburied and unhonoured they shall be meat for the dogs of war. Frequently have malicious men met with a fate so dire as to be evidently the award of retributive justice. Although the great assize is reserved for another world, yet even here, at the common sessions of providence, justice often bares her avenging sword in the eyes of all the people.

11. "*But the king shall rejoice in God.*" Usurpers shall fade, but he shall flourish; and his prosperity shall be publicly acknowledged as the gift of God. The Lord's anointed shall not fail to offer his joyful thanksgiving: his well-established throne shall own the superior lordship of the King of kings; his rejoicing shall be alone in God. When his subjects sing, "*Io triumphe,*" he will bid them chant, "*Te Deum.*" "*Every one that sweareth by him shall glory.*" His faithful followers shall have occasion for triumph: they shall never need to blush for the oath of their allegiance. Or, "swearing by *him*," may signify adherence to *God*, and worship paid to him. The heathen swore by their gods, and the Israelite called Jehovah to witness to his asseveration: those, therefore, who owned the Lord as their God should have reason to glory when he proved himself the defender of the King's righteous cause, and the destroyer of traitors. "*But the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.*" And the sooner the better. If shame will not do it, nor fear, nor reason, then let them be stopped with the sexton's shovel-full of earth; for a liar is a human devil, he is the curse of men, and accursed of God, who has comprehensively said, "all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." See the difference between the mouth that praises God, and the mouth that forges lies: the first shall never be stopped, but shall sing on for ever; the second shall be made speechless at the bar of God

O Lord, we seek thee and thy truth; deliver us from all malice and slander, and reveal to us thine own self, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS

Title.—"*When he was in the wilderness of Judah.*" Even in Canaan, though a fruitful land, and the people numerous, yet there were wildernesses. . . . It will be so in the world, in the church, but not in heaven. . . . All the straits and difficulties of a wilderness must not put us out of tune for sacred songs; but even then it is our duty and interest to keep up a cheerful communion with God. There are Psalms proper for a wilderness; and we have reason to thank God it is the wilderness of Judah we are in, not the wilderness of Sin.—*Matthew Henry.*

Title.—"*The Wilderness of Judah*" is the whole wilderness towards the east of the tribe of Judah, bounded on the north by the tribe of Benjamin, stretching southward to the south-west end of the Dead Sea; westward, to the Dead Sea and the Jordan; and eastward, to the mountains of Judah.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Title.—The term "*wilderness*" (מִדְבָּר, as distinguished from עֲרָבָה, a *steppe*) was given to a district which was not regularly cultivated and inhabited, but used for pasturage (from דָּבַר, to *drive*), being generally without wood and defective in water, but not entirely destitute of vegetation.—*J. P. Lange.*

Title.—Hagar saw God in the wilderness, and called a well by the name derived from that vision, *Beer-lahai-roi*. Gen. xvi. 13, 14. Moses saw God in the wilderness. Exod. iii. 1—4. Elijah saw God in the wilderness. 1 Kings

xix. 4—18. David saw God in the wilderness. The Christian church will see God in the wilderness. Rev. xii. 6—14. Every devout soul which has loved to see God in his house will be refreshed by visions of God in the wilderness of solitude, sorrow, sickness, and death.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Whole Psalm.—This is unquestionably one of the most beautiful and touching Psalms in the whole Psalter. Donne says of it: "As the whole Book of Psalms is, *oleum effusum* (as the spouse speaks of the name of Christ), an ointment poured out upon all sorts of sores, a cerecloth that supples all bruises, a balm that searches all wounds; so are there some certain Psalms that are imperial Psalms, that command over all affections, and spread themselves over all occasions—catholic, universal Psalms, that apply themselves to all necessities. This is one of these; for of those constitutions which are called apostolical, one is that the church should meet every day to sing this Psalm. And, accordingly, St. Chrysostom testifies, 'That it was decreed and ordained by the primitive Fathers, that no day should pass without the public singing of this Psalm.'"—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Whole Psalm.—This Psalm is aptly described by Clauss as "A precious confession of a soul thirsting after God and his grace, and finding itself quickened through inward communion with him, and which knows how to commit its outward lot also into his hand." Its lesson is, that the consciousness of communion with God in trouble is the sure pledge of deliverance. This is the peculiar fountain of consolation which is opened up to the sufferer in the Psalm. The Berleb Bible describes it as a Psalm "which proceeds from a spirit really in earnest. It was the favourite Psalm of M. Schade, the famous preacher in Berlin, which he daily prayed with such earnestness and appropriation to himself, that it was impossible to hear it without emotion."—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 1.—"*O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee*" (or, I will diligently seek thee, as merchants precious stones that are of greatest value): "*my soul thirsteth for thee.*" He doth not say my soul thirsteth for water, but my soul thirsteth for *thee*; nor he doth not say my soul thirsteth for the blood of my enemies, but my soul thirsteth for *thee*; nor he doth not say my soul thirsteth for deliverance out of this dry and barren wilderness, but my soul thirsteth for *thee* in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; nor he doth not say my soul thirsteth for a crown, a kingdom, but my soul thirsteth for *thee*, my flesh longeth for *thee*. These words are a notable metaphor, taken from women with child, to note his earnest, ardent, and strong affections towards God.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 1.—"*O God.*" This is a serious word; pity it should ever be used as a by-word.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 1.—"*My God*" in Hebrew is the same word with which the Lord cried out upon the cross to the Father about the ninth hour: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" For in Hebrew this Psalm begins *Elohim, Eli.* Now, *Elohim* is *plural*, and *Eli* is singular, to express the mystery of the Trinity, the mystery of the Unity, the distinct subsistence of the (three) hypostases, and their consubstantiality.—*Psalterium Quin. Fabri stapulensis*, 1513.

Verse 1 (*first clause*).—In David we have a notable example of a sensitive, tender, self-analyzing soul, living in sustained communion with God, while deeply sensible of the claims of the civil and religious polity of Israel, and, moreover, while externally involved to a large round of exacting public duties. And in this Psalm public misfortunes do not force him back upon the central strength of the life of his spirit. For the time his crown, his palace, his honours, the hearts of his people, the love of his child, whom he loved, as we know, with such passing tenderness, are forfeited. The psalmist is alone with God. In his hour of desolation he looks up from the desert to heaven. "*O God,*" he cries, "*thou art my God.*" In the original language he does not repeat the word which is translated "*God.*" In *Elohim*, the true idea of the

root is that of awe, while the adjectival form implies permanency. In *Ex.* the second word employed, the etymological also is that of might, strength. We might paraphrase, "O thou Ever-sacred One, our Strength, or my Strong God art thou!" But the second word, *Eli*, is in itself nothing less than a separate revelation of an entire aspect of the Being of God. It is, indeed, used as a proper and distinct name of God. The pronominal suffixes for the second and third persons are, as Gesenius has remarked, never once found with this name *Ex.*; whereas *Eli*, the first person, occurs very frequently in the Psalter alone. We all of us remember it in the words actually uttered by our Lord upon the cross, and which he took from the Hypocrisis version of Psalm xxii. The word unveils a truth unknown beyond the precincts of revelation. It teaches us that the Almighty and Eternal gives himself in the fullness of his Being to the soul that seeks him. Heathenism, indeed, in its cultus of domestic and local deities, of its penates, of its ἐπιχώριοι, bore witness by those superstitions to the deep yearning of the human heart for the individualizing love of a higher power. To know the true God was to know that such a craving was satisfied. "*My God.*" The word represents not a human impression, or desire, or conceit, but an aspect, a truth, a necessity of the divine nature. Man can, indeed, give himself by [illegible] of his thought, of his heart, of his endeavour, upon his brother man. In other words, man can be imperfect in his acts as he is imperfect and finite in his nature. But when God, the Perfect Being, loves the creature of his hand, he cannot thus divide his love. He must perforce love with the whole directness, and strength, and intensity of his Being; for he is God, and therefore incapable of partial and imperfect action. He must give himself to the single soul with as absolute a completeness as if there were no other being besides it, and, on his side, man knows that this gift of himself by God is thus entire; and in no narrow spirit of ambitious egoism, but as grasping and representing the [illegible] he cries, "*My God.*" Therefore does this word enter so largely into the composition of Hebrew names. Men loved to dwell upon that wondrous relation of the Creator to their personal life which is so strikingly manifested. Therefore, when God had "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," we find St. Paul writing to the Galatians as if his own single soul had been redeemed by the sacrifice of Calvary: "He loved me, and gave himself for me."—*Henry Parry Liddon, in "Some Words for God: being Sermons preached before the University of Oxford*, 1863—1865."

Verse 1 (*first clause*).—There is a great deal more in it than men of the world are aware of; to say, "*O God, thou art my God,*" in this connection and conjunction: there is more in it in regard [illegible] there is more in it in regard of difficulty likewise. It is not an unfruitful thing to say it, and it is not an easy thing to say it neither. It confers a great deal of benefit, and requires a great deal of grace, which belongs unto it, in the truth and reality of it. The benefit of it, first, is very great; yea, in effect all things else. To say God is ours, is to say the whole world is ours, and a great deal more; it is to give us title to everything which may be requisite or convenient for me. Whatever we can desire or stand in need of, it is all wrapt up in this "*Thou art my God.*" But then, again, it is a matter of difficulty (as those things which are excellent are). It is a thing which is not so easily said as the world imagines it and thinks it to be. Indeed, it is easy to the mouth, but it is not easy to the heart. It is easy to have a fancy to say it, but it is not to have a faith to say it: this carries some kind of hardship with it, and it is not presently attained unto, but the mind of man withdraws from it. There are two states and conditions in which it is very difficult to say, "*O God, thou art my God:*" the one is the state of nature and unregeneracy; and the other is the state of desertion, and the hiding of God's face from the soul.—*Thomas Horton* (—1673).

Verse 1 (*second clause*).—The relations of God to his people are not bare and empty titles, but they carry some activity with them, both from him towards

them, and from them also answerably towards him. Those whom God is a God to, he bestows special favours upon them; and those to whom God is a God, they return special services to him. And so we shall find it to be all along in Scripture, as this David in another place: "Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee." Ps. cxviii. 28. And so here: "*Thou art my God; early will I seek thee.*" While the servants of God have claimed any interest in him, they have also exhibited duty to him. The text is an expression not only of faith, but likewise of obedience, and so to be looked upon by us.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 1.—"*Early;*" *in the morning*, before all things, God is to be sought, otherwise he is sought in vain: as the manna, unless collected at early dawn, dissolves.—*Simon de Muis.*

Verse 1.—"*My soul thirsteth for thee.*" Oh that Christ would come near, and stand still, and give me leave to look upon him! for to look seemeth the poor man's privilege, since he may, for nothing and without hire, behold the sun. I should have a king's life, if I had no other thing to do than for evermore to behold and eye my fair Lord Jesus: nay, suppose I were holden out at heaven's fair entry, I should be happy for evermore, to look through a hole in the door, and see my dearest and fairest Lord's face. O great King! why standest thou aloof? Why remainest thou beyond the mountains? O Well-beloved, why dost thou pain a poor soul with delays? A long time out of thy glorious presence is two deaths and two hells to me. We must meet. I must see him, I dow* not want him. Hunger and longing for Christ hath brought on such a necessity of enjoying Christ, that, cost me what it will, I cannot but assure Christ that I will not, I dow not want him; for I cannot master nor command Christ's love.—*Samuel Rutherford* (1600—1661).

Verse 1.—"*My flesh*," that is, my bodily sensitive appetite, which thirsts, ardently longs for consolation, which it receives from the abounding of spiritual consolation to the soul. This meaning greatly pleases me. God giveth the upper and the nether springs. Rebekah, after drawing water in her pitcher, for Eliezer, Abraham's servant, added, "*I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking*," Gen. xxiv. 19. Jacob dug a well near to Sychar, which was afterwards called Samaria, and as the woman of Samaria said, "*drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle*," John iv. 12. When Moses with the rod smote the rock twice, "*the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also*," Numb. xx. 11. So God satisfies with this consolation both our higher and lower nature.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 1.—"*My flesh longeth for thee.*" The verb כָּמַהּ is used only in this place, and therefore the signification of it is rather uncertain, but it will receive light from the Arabic dialect. In Golius's Lexicon it signifies, *caligavit oculus, alteratus colore, et mente debilitatus fuit.* His eye grew dim, his colour was changed, and his mind was weakened; and therefore, as used by the psalmist, implies the utmost intenseness of fervency of desire, as though it almost impaired his sight, altered the very hue of his body, and even injured his understanding; effects sometimes of eager and unsatisfied desires.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 1.—"*In a dry.*" Here we must read, בְּאֶרֶץ [Keeretz], instead of בְּאֶרֶץ [Beeretz], for it is, "*like* this," and not, "*in* this" (which has no force), even like this dry, wearied, and waterless region; so am I for seeing thee in the sanctuary, for beholding thy power and thy glory.—*Benjamin Weiss, in a "New Translation of the Book of Psalms, with Critical Notes,"* etc., 1858.

Weiss appears to have the authority of several MSS. for this, but he seldom errs in the direction of too little dogmatism.—*C. H. S.*

Verses 1, 2.—"*O God, thou art my God.*"—He embraceth him at first word, as we use to do friends at first meeting. "*Early will I seek thee*," says he: "*my*

* Am not able to do without him.

soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh" (that is, myself) "*longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.*" Surely David had some extraordinary business now with God to be done for himself, as it follows (verse 2): "*To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary;*" where God had met him, and manifested himself to him. . . . The very sight of a friend re joiceth a man (Prov. xxxvii. 17): "As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth a man the face of his friend." It alone whets up joy by a sympathy of spirits; and in answer hereunto it is characteristically to God's people called the seeking of God's face, that is, himself, for so his face is taken: "Thou shalt have no other gods before my face;" that is, thou shalt have myself, or none but myself Personal communion with God is the end of our graces; for as reason and the intercourse of it makes men sociable one with another, so the divine nature makes us sociable with God himself: and the life we live by is but an engine, a glass to bring God down to us.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 2.—"*To see thy power,*" etc. I. It is, or should be, the desire of every Christian to see and enjoy more and more of the glory of God. II. That the accomplishment of this design is to be sought by a devout and diligent attendance upon the worship of the sanctuary. How is God's character in the sanctuary manifested to believers? 1. By the ministry of reconciliation—by the exhibition of gospel truth. 2. Believers grow in their knowledge of the divine character in the sanctuary, by observing and feeling the application of those great doctrines to the souls of men, by the power and influence of the Holy Spirit. III. The effects that result to the believer in his history and experience, from an increasing knowledge of the power and glory of God. The effects of this knowledge are great and manifold. 1. The believer, by fresh displays of the divine glory, is disenchanted from the fascination of the world 2. Another effect of an increasing acquaintance with God, and of every view of the divine glory we obtain, is that the mind is disentangled from the embarrassments into which it is sometimes thrown by the aspect of providence. 3. By seeing the divine power and glory in the sanctuary, we shall have our strength renewed to go on our Christian course afresh. 4. A view of the divine glory crucifies our lusts, and puts the corruptions of our heart to death. 5. Fresh views of the divine power and glory nourish our humility. 6. These views of the divine glory in the sanctuary arm us for our conflict with the last enemy. Concluding remarks: 1. That it is characteristic of every good man, that he is devoutly attached to the solemnities of public worship. 2. That his object in going to the sanctuary is definite and distinct.—*John Angell James.*

Verse 2.—"*So as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.*" To converse with ordinances, and not to converse with God; to have to do with ordinances, and not to have to do with God, alas! they are but dry breasts, and a miscarrying womb that will never bring forth the fruits of holiness. Ordinances without God are but like bones that have no marrow in them; they are but like shells without a kernel. Your hearing will be in vain; and your praying will be in vain; there will be no spirit-moving, no voice-answering, no heart-warmings, no soul-refreshing, no God-meetings.—*William Strong* (—1654) *in the* "*Saints' Communion.*"

Verse 2.—God's glory is in the firmament, in all the creatures, but more especially and fully in the church. Psalm xxix. 9, "In his temple doth every one speak of his glory;" there it is most visible, affecting, and provoking of every one to speak. In the world few take notice of it, but in the temple every one sees it, and speaks of it. The world is God opened, and so glorious; the church is Christ opened, and so very glorious. This made David long to be in the sanctuary when he was in the wilderness; and why so? "*To see thy power and thy glory.*" Could not David see them in the heavens, in the mountains, in the goodly cedars, and other works of God? Yes, but not as in the sanctuary; and therefore he saith, "*To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary;*" there I have seen thee otherwise than ever

elsewhere; there he saw the king upon his throne and in his glory.—*William Greenhill.*

Verse 3.—"*Thy lovingkindness is better than life;*" or, "*better than lives,*" as the Hebrew hath it [chaiim]. Divine favour is better than life; it is better than life with all its revenues, with all its appurtenances, as honours, riches, pleasures, applause, &c.; yea, it is better than many lives put together. Now you know at what a high rate men value their lives; they will bleed, sweat, vomit, purge, part with an estate, yea, with a limb, yea, limbs, to preserve their lives. As he cried out, "Give me any deformity, any torment, any misery, so you spare my life." Now, though life be so dear and precious to a man, yet a deserted soul prizes the returnings of divine favour upon him above life, yea, above many lives. Many men have been weary of their lives, as is evident in Scripture and history; but no man was ever yet found that was weary of the love and favour of God. No man sets so high a price upon the sun as he that hath long lain in a dark dungeon, &c.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 3.—"*Thy lovingkindness is better than life.*" The love of life is a very frequent and pernicious snare, which a sense of God's love must deliver us from being entangled by. What so desirable as life, if a man have no place in the heart of God? This is the greatest temporal blessing, and nothing can outdo it, but the favour of the God of our life; and this excels indeed. What comparison is there between the breath in our nostrils, and the favour of an eternal God? any more than there is between an everlasting light and a poor vanishing vapour. Compare Isaiah lx. 19 with James iv. 14. Who would not, therefore, hate his own life, which hangs in doubt continually before him, and of which he can have no assurance, when he knows that the living God is his certain portion? Who would not freely yield up and part with ten thousand such lives, one after another (if he had so many), rather than the wrath of God should be kindled but a little.—*Timothy Cruso* (1657—1697).

Verse 3 (*first clause*).—God's *mercy is better than lives.* What lives? Those which for themselves men have chosen. One hath chosen for himself a life of business, another a country life, another a life of usury, another a military life; one this, another that. Divers are the lives, but *better is thy* life *than* our *lives.* Better is that which thou givest to men amended, than that which perverse men choose? One life thou givest, which should be preferred to all our lives, whatsoever in the world we might have chosen.—*Augustine.*

Verse 3.—"*Life*" is an *impure good.* It is a good which is implicated and involved with abundance of evils. There are many crosses, and troubles, and calamities, which the life of man is subject unto; which, though it have some comfort in it, yet that comfort is much troubled and mixed; yea, but now the favour of God it is good, and nothing but good. As it is said of his blessing, it adds no sorrow with it, nor has it any inconvenience in it, nor has it any evil attendant upon it.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 3.—"*My lips shall praise thee.*" Is it possible that any man should love another and not commend him, nor speak of him? If thou hast but a hawk or a hound that thou lovest, thou wilt commend it; and can it stand with love to Christ, yet seldom or never to speak of him nor of his love, never to commend him unto others, that they may fall in love with him also? You shall see the Spouse (Cant. v. 9, 16) when she was asked, *what her beloved was above others?* she sets him out in every part of him, and concludes with this: "*he is altogether lovely!*" "*Because thy lovingkindness* (saith *David*) *is better than life, my lips shall praise thee, and I will bless thee while I live.*" Can it stand with this life of love, to be always speaking about worldly affairs, or news at the best; both week-day and Sabbath-day, in bed and at board, in good company and in bad, at home and abroad? I tell you, it will be one main reason why you desire to live, that you may make the Lord Jesus known to your children, friends, acquaintance, that so in the ages to come his name might ring, and his memorial might be of sweet odour, from generation to generation

Ps. lxxi. 18. If before thy conversion, especially, thou hast poisoned others by thy vain and corrupt speeches, after thy conversion thou wilt seek to season the hearts of others by a gracious, sweet, and wise communication of savoury and blessed speeches; what the Lord hath taught thee thou wilt talk of it unto others, for the sake of him whom thou lovest.—*Thomas Sheppard* (1605—1649), *in* "*The Sound Beleever.*"

Verses 3—6.—David exalts *lovingkindness* as a queen above all other, even the most precious, blessings bestowed upon him, "*because thy lovingkindness is better than* [above] *life.*" Around her throne he places seven members of his body and faculties of his mind, as the seven chief angels . . . who stand before the Lord, that they may praise and admire her: these are his lips, his tongue, his hands, his will, his mouth, his memory, and his intellect. For first, he extols the lovingkindness of God with his lips (verse 3): "*My lips shall praise thee.*" Secondly, with his tongue (verse 4): "*Thus will I bless thee while I live.*" Thirdly, with his hands: "*I will lift up my hands in thy name.*" Fourthly, with his will (verse 5): "*My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness.*" Fifthly, with his mouth: "*And my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.*" Sixthly, with his memory (verse 6): "*When I remember thee upon my bed.*" Seventhly and lastly, with his intellect: "*And meditate on thee in the night watches.*"—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 4.—"*Thus will I bless thee.*" There are two ways especially in which God is blest of his creatures. The one is *objectively*, by way of representation; and the other is *ex parte fruentis*, by way of publication. According to the first sense, so all the creatures bless him: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." Psalm xix. 1. "Sun and moon, and fire and hail, and snow and vapours." Psalm cxlviii. 3, 7, 8. All these they so bless him thus. But according to the second sense, so he is blest only by angels and men, who are therefore to do it with so much the greater intension. "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power," etc. Psalm cxlv. 10, 11.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 4.—"*I will lift up my hands.*" The practice of lifting up the hands in prayer towards heaven, the supposed residence of the object to which prayer is addressed, was anciently used both by believers, as appears from various passages in the Old Testament; and by the heathen, agreeably to numerous instances in the classical writers. Parkhurst, considering the "hand" to be the chief organ or instrument of man's power and operations, and properly supposing the word to be likewise used very extensively by the Hebrews for power, agency, dominion, assistance, and the like, regards the lifting up of men's hands in prayer, as an emblematical acknowledging of the *power*, and implority of the *assistance*, of their respective gods. Is it not, however, the natural and unstudied gesture of earnest supplication?—*Richard Mant.*

Verse 5.—"*My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness.*" My soul shall be satisfied as if I had received all that is intimated by the rich pieces of the peace-offering.—*Andrew A. Bonar*, on Levit. iii. 9, 10.

Verse 5.—"*My soul shall be satisfied with fatness and fatness;*" so the Hebrew hath it; that is, my soul shall be tearful of comfort, it shall be filled up to the brim with pleasure and delight, in the remembrance and enjoyment of God upon my bed, or upon my beds, in the plural, as the Hebrew hath it. David had many a hard bed and many a hard lodging, whilst he was in the wilderness condition. It oftentimes so fell out that he had nothing but the bare ground for his bed, and the stones for his pillows, and the heavens for his curtains, and the heavens for his canopy; yet, in this condition, God was sweeter than marrow and fatness to him; though his bed was never so hard, yet in God he had full satisfaction and content. Jer. xxxi. 14; Philip. iv. 9.—*Thomas Brooks*

Verse 5.—There is that in a gracious God and in communion with him,

which gives abundant satisfaction to a soul. Psalm xxxvi. 8; lxv. 4. And there is that in a gracious soul, which takes abundant satisfaction in God, and in communion with him.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 5.—Sanctified *Knowledge*, saith, There is an infinite fulness in Christ, the fulness of a fountain. *Faith* saith, This is all for me, for he is my husband; then *Prayer* saith, If all this be thine, I will go and fetch it for thee; and *Thankfulness* says, I will return praise to God for it (and that's better than the receiving of mercies): "*My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.*"—*Matthew Lawrence, in "The Use and Practice of Faith,"* 1657.

Verse 5.—In the words which I have chosen as the subject of discourse, the psalmist expresses his humble expectation of having his soul feasted in the sanctuary. I intend, *first*, to show how the Lord satisfies the souls of men as with marrow and fatness; and, *secondly*, to point out the reason which believers have to conclude that they shall be thus satisfied in the ordinances of divine worship. 1. I will endeavour, then, in the first place, to show how the Lord satisfies the souls of men as with marrow and fatness. And, in general, it may be observed, that he imparts such satisfaction by condescending to hold communion with them. This is the feast which our Lord promises to every sinner who opens his heart to receive him: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Rev. iii. 20. This was also the banquet to which the spouse of Christ was admitted, when she said, "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love." S. Song ii. 4. More particularly, 1. The Lord satisfies the souls of his people as with marrow and fatness, *by feasting them with the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ.* The Son of God became incarnate, shed his blood, and fulfilled all righteousness, that he might be food for our souls. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." John i. 14. And in his incarnate person he is living bread to us, bread that gives spiritual and eternal life to our souls, and effectually prevents them from perishing. . . . . 2. The Lord satisfies the souls of his people as with marrow and fatness, *by showing them his glory in the face of Christ.* By this means the psalmist David desired and expected to have his soul feasted, as we learn from the second verse of this Psalm: "To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary." . . . . A saving sight of the glory of God in our Immanuel must be inexpressibly comfortable; it is a feast to the soul, and is productive of joy unspeakable and full of glory. . . . . 3. The Lord satisfies the souls of his people as with marrow and fatness, *by shedding abroad his love in their hearts.* This was another way in which David expected to have his soul feasted. He had felt the sweetness of divine love, he had tasted that the Lord was gracious; he knew by happy experience that his lovingkindness was sweeter than all the comforts of life; and he hoped to be blessed with further experience of his love, with such experience as would warm his heart, and afford matter of a new song of praise to God: and thus he expected to be satisfied as with marrow and fatness. He says, therefore, in the third verse of this Psalm, "Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee." . . . . 4. The Lord satisfies the souls of his people as with marrow and fatness, *when he feasts them with new-covenant promises.* He hath given us exceeding great and precious promises; promises which are filled with all the fulness of God, and which are all in Christ, yea, and amen, to the glory of God. These promises are published to us all in the gospel, that we may embrace them by faith. But, alas! so great is the folly of men, that they put from them these words of grace, and judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life. Such folly is natural even to the people of God as well as others. . . . . But when the rock of Israel, in a day of power, speaks these promises to them, they no longer reject, but cordially receive them in Christ, and gladly feast upon them. Then his words are found, and they eat them; and his word is the joy and rejoicing of their hearts. . . . 5. The Lord also satisfies the souls of his people, *by*

filling them with the Spirit. We are famishing while we are in a state of nature, "having not the Spirit;" for while without the Spirit, we are also without Christ. But when the Lord puts his Spirit within us, then our starving souls begin to be feasted; for this blessed Spirit shows us the things of Christ, and applies him to us; by which means we are enabled to eat his flesh, and drink his blood. And after the Holy Ghost is thus given, he is never taken away. . . . . It is the promise of our Redeemer, that, if a man believe on him, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water:" and "this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." John vii. 38, 39. 6. The Lord satisfies his people as with marrow and fatness, *when he revives former experiences* of his kindness. Often he gives them, so to speak, a new feast upon an old experience. . . . . II. I now proceed to point out some of the reasons which believers have to conclude that their souls shall be satisfied in the ordinances of divine worship. And, 1. They may reasonably found such a conclusion upon *the divine goodness.* 2. Believers may ground an expectation of being satisfied as with marrow and fatness, on the incarnation, the humiliation, and the death of Christ. 3. The fulness laid up in Christ is also a good foundation for such a hope. 4. Believers may also conclude from the divine promise that their souls shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness. 5. From their being blessed with the spiritual appetite. 6. Their former experience of the Lord's satisfying them, may also encourage believers to hope that he will again satisfy them, as with marrow and fatness.—*Outline of a Sermon, by John Fraser* (1745—1818).

Verse 5:—

Ever full, but hungry ever,
What they have, they still desire
Never suffer surfeit's loathing,
Nor yet famine's torments dire:
Hungering still, they eat, and eating,
Still the sacred food require.

Peter Damiano (988—1072).

Verses 5, 6.—David had his sweetmeats and heavenly junkets in the night when the eyes of others were closed, and saw not the charger which was sent from above for his spiritual refreshment. His solitary meditations brought him more solace and comfort than the whole creation could afford him: "*When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches, my soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness.*" Communion with God in secret is a heaven upon earth. What food can compare with the hidden manna? Some persons have excellent banquets in their closets. That bread which the saints eat in secret, how pleasant is it! Ah! what stranger can imagine the joy, the melody, which even the secret tears of the saints cause! Believers find rich mines of silver and gold in solitary places; they fetch up precious jewels out of secret holes, out of the bottom of the ocean, where are no inhabitants. Naturalists observe that those fish are sweetest which lie hid. Saints have often sweet joy and refreshment in secret; they have meat to eat, which the world knoweth not of. The fig-tree, olive, and vine would not leave their sweetness, fatness, and cheerfulness, to be kings over other trees. Judges ix. 11—13. They that know what it is to enjoy God in secret, would not leave it, or lose it, to be kings or commanders over the whole world.—*George Swinnock.*

Verse 6.—"*When I remember thee upon my bed,* (and) *meditate on thee in the night watches.*" Thus the English version connects this verse with verse 5. But the division of the strophes renders the following translation preferable, which, moreover, obviates the need of supplying "and:" "Whenever I remember thee upon my bed, I meditate on thee in the night watches." The remembrance of thee on my bed so engrosses me, that I cannot draw my mind off the thought, so as to fall into the obliviousness of sleep; I often meditate

on thee through the whole night watches. So Ps. cxix. 55, 148; Ps. i. 2. The Hebrew is *beds;* probably alluding to the fact that in his unsettled life in exile, he seldom slept for many nights in the same bed, but through fear of adversaries slept in different places. There were three night watches: *the first* (Lam. ii. 19); *the middle* (Judg. vii. 19); *the third*, or *morning watch* (Exod. xiv. 24; 1 Sam. ii. 11). In the New Testament, the Roman usage of four prevails.—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 6.—"*Remember—and meditate.*" The *meditation* of anything hath more sweetness in it than bare remembrance. The memory is the chest to lay up a truth, but meditation is the palate to feed upon it. The memory is like the ark in which the manna was laid up; meditation is like Israel's eating of the manna. When David began to meditate upon God, it *was sweet* to him as marrow. There is as much difference between a truth remembered and a truth meditated, as between a cordial in the glass and a cordial drunk down.—*John Wells* (1668), *in* "*Sabbath Holiness.*"

Verse 6.—"*Upon my bed.*" The *bed* may be looked upon as a place for the remembrance of God in it, according to a threefold notion. I. As *a place of choice.* In the bed, of choice, rather than anywhere else, where I am left to my liberty. David when he had a mind to remember God, he would make choice of his bed for it, as most suitable and agreeable to it. In case of excessive weariness, or weakness contracted to the body from some occasion (this is often put accidentally in Scripture), "To commune with our hearts upon our bed," etc., the occasion of it here; it may fall out that the bed may be the fittest place for such a duty as this. Ps. iv. 4. II. As it is *a place of necessity.* In my bed at least, when I cannot anywhere else, as having restraints upon me. David, when (as now it was with him) he was detained from the public ordinances, whether by sickness, or any other impediment which he could not withstand, yet he would not now wholly forget God; he would remember him even in his bed. This is another notion in which we may take it. III. As *a place of indifferency;* that is, there as well as anywhere besides. I will not only remember thee when I am up, when I shall make it my business to remember thee, but even in my bed too. I will take an occasion and opportunity to remember thee there. By commending myself to thee, when I lie down to rest, and acknowledging and owning of thee when I first awake.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 6.—There were "*night watches*" kept in the tabernacle for praising God (Ps. cxxxiv. i.), which it is probable David, when he had liberty, joined with the Levites in; but now he could not keep place with them, he kept time with them, and wished himself among them.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 7.—"*Because thou hast been.*" The surest way, and the nearest way, to lay hold upon God is the consideration of that which he hath done already, which was David's way here; because, says he, this was God's way before, therefore will I look for God in this way still. The language in which God spake to man, the Hebrew, hath no present tense. They form not their verbs, as our western languages do, in the present tense, but they begin at that which is past. God carries us in his language, in his speaking, upon that which is past, upon that which he hath done already. I cannot have better security for present nor future than God's former mercies exhibited to me.—*Abraham Wright.*

Verse 7.—"*Thou hast been my help.*" From this one word—that God hath been my *help*—I make account that we have both these notions; first, that God hath not left me to myself, he hath come to my succour, he hath helped me; and then, that God hath not left out myself, he hath been my help, but he hath left something for me to do with him and by his help. My security for the future in this consideration of that which is past lies not only in this, that God hath delivered me, but in this also, that he hath delivered me by way of a help, and help always presumes an endeavour and co-operation in him that is helped. God did not elect me as a helper, nor create me, nor redeem me, nor convert me, by way of helping me; for he alone did all, and he had no use at all for me.

God infuses his first grace, the first way, merely as a giver, entirely, all himself; but his subsequent grace as a helper; therefore we call them auxiliant graces, helping graces, and we always receive them when we endeavour to make use of his former grace.—*John Donne.*

Verse 7.—"*My help.*" I. In *duty*. He helps his people here. There is nothing which God requires of his people, as to be done by them, but himself helps them in the doing of it. He is not like the Egyptian task-masters, which require brick and give no straw wherewithal to make it. II. In *conflict*. He assists here also. As when the Israelite and the Egyptian strove together, Moses came in and helped the Israelite (Exod. ii. 12); even so does God in this case with us, when we are wrestling and struggling with Satan, who is our spiritual enemy, the Lord is here nigh to help us, which may encourage us still in our resistance and opposition: we have a mighty second to stand for us, and to take up our quarrel. III. In *affliction*. God helps his people; namely, to bear patiently those crosses which he lays upon them. He takes part with them in their sufferings, and in all their afflictions is afflicted himself, as sometimes he expresses it. He lays no more upon them than he does help them, and enable them, to endure. 1. He helps them *from*, by way of prevention. 2. He helps them *in*, by way of support. 3. He helps them *out*, by way of rescue, and redemption, and deliverance.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 7.—"*My help.*" Thou hast been not only my helper, but my "*help*," for we could never have helped ourselves, and could any creature have been helpful to us but by him.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 7.—"*MY help.*" There is more encouragement in the least blessing bestowed upon ourselves than in the greatest blessing bestowed upon a stranger; and, therefore, on every occasion we may safely say, that a whole library of biographical books, and those relating exclusively to righteous individuals, could not so minister to the assurance of a believer as the documents which his own memory can furnish. These, then, should often engage his study, whether he be the rich or the poor. He should do just as David did. Doubtless David was well acquainted with the histories of Noah, and of Abraham, of Jacob, of Joseph, of Moses; and the records of these eminent servants of God were records of surprising deliverances, of divine promises made good, and human wants supplied. Nevertheless, when himself in the wilderness, David did not recur to these records for encouragement. His exclamation is: "*Because thou hast been MY help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.*"—*Henry Melvill.*

Verse 7.—"*Will I rejoice.*"—As a bird, sheltered in the rich foliage from the heat of the sun, sings its merry notes: so he celebrates his songs of praise from the shadow of the wings of God.—*Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 8.—"*My soul followeth hard after thee.*" This is the language of a good man in his worst frames; for when he has lost his nearness to God, he will be uneasy till he has again obtained it, and will follow after it with all his might. It is also his language in his best frames; for when he knows and enjoys most of God, he wants to know and enjoy more. But it may especially be considered as the language of an afflicted and seeking soul, not sinking under its burden, but earnestly breathing after deliverance, and supported by the prospect of obtaining it. Hence it follows, "*Thy right hand upholdeth me.*" . . . . I. I shall consider what is implied in the soul's following hard after God, and then enquire the reason of it. I. Following hard after God supposes, 1. A previous acquaintance with him. An unknown good, be it ever so desirable in itself, cannot be the object of desire. Hence, when God shines into the heart, it is to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, as the foundation of all gracious exercises, and especially as the source of all fervent desires after him. 2. Following hard after God is expressive of ardent and intense desires. It does not consist in cold and languid wishes, but insatiable longings after communion with God and conformity to his will. 3. It implies

laborious exertion. My soul followeth, it followeth *hard after thee*. Not earth nor heaven merely is the object of pursuit, but God himself. And the desires of a truly renewed soul are not sluggish and ineffectual; they lead him to the use of all appointed means, and to the exertion of his utmost endeavours till the object be attained. 4. Perseverance in seeking. *To follow* implies this, and to follow *hard* implies it more strongly. It is as if the psalmist had said, "Does God retire? I will pursue. Does he withhold the blessing? I will wrestle with him till I obtain it. He long waited to be gracious, and I will now wait till he is so." II. We are to enquire the reason why David thus followed hard after God. 1. Guilt and distress followed hard after him. 2. His enemies also followed hard after him. Satan did so, and once and again caused him to stumble and fall. 3. He had followed hard after other things to no purpose. 4. We may add the powerful attractives of divine grace.—*Condensed from Benjamin Beddome's Sermon, "The Christian's Pursuit," in "Short Discourses,"* 1809.

Verse 8.—"*My soul followeth hard after thee.*" דָּבְקָה אַחֲרֶיךָ. The primary sense of דָּבַק is *agglutinavit*, to glue together; from thence it signifies figuratively to *associate*, to adhere to, to be united with; and particularly to be firmly united with strong affection. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ, and cleave to his wife;" properly, be closely united and compacted with his wife, with the most permanent affection. Gen. ii. 24. The psalmist, therefore, means that his soul adhered to God with the warmest affection, and longed to offer up his sacrifices of praise in his sanctuary.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 8.—"*My soul followeth hard after thee.*" דָּבְקָה, *adhæsit, adherescit anima mea post te:* My soul cleaves after thee, as do things which hang by another; the root is of so great frequency in Scripture, as of enquiry amongst critics; it importeth here the posture of David's spirit, and speaketh it close to God; and so depending upon him, as nothing could loosen it from him: Satan's subtlety, Saul's cruelty, his own personal loss and indemnity, are not all of them of any force or dexterity, to cut asunder or untie the Gordian knot of this unity. The cleaving of David's spirit was a glueing of the Lord's spirit: a marriage of the Lord's making is altogether incapable of the devil's breaking.

It is no wonder David's words report him so much devoted to God, seeing with the same breath they speak him supported by God: "*Thy right hand upholdeth me,*" saith he.—*Alexander Pringle, in "A Stay in Trouble; or, the Saint's Rest in the Evil Day,"* 1657.

Verse 8.—"*My soul followeth hard after thee.*" The original is נַפְשִׁי אַחֲרֶיךָ. "*My soul cleaves after thee.*" As if he had said, Go, lead on, my God! Behold, I follow as near, as close, as I can; *e vestigio;* I would not leave any distance, but pursue thy footsteps, step by step, leaning upon thine everlasting arms, that are underneath me, and following thy manuduction.—*John Gibbon, in "The Morning Exercises,"* 1661.

Verse 8.—The *soul's* following, and following *hard* after God—what means this? Surely it intends much more than a languid, inert inclination; or "the desire of the slothful which killeth him, because his hands refuse to labour." It evinces an intenseness of concern that quickens and rouses the man into life and earnestness; that draws his very soul along with it; that reconciles him to every needful exertion and sacrifice, however trying; and urges him to persevere, whatever difficulties or discouragements he meets with in his course. And sometimes the distance is long, and the progress up hill, and the road rough, and the weather unfriendly, and enemies would thrust us back; and sometimes we lose sight of him, and ask those we meet: "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" and when we spy him again, he seems to advance as we advance, and when we gain upon him and get nearer, he seems to look back and frown, and tell us to retire. The exercises and feelings of Christians in the divine life will enable them to explain these allusions

Who among them all has not, like the Jews, been sometimes "discouraged because of the way?" Who has not resembled Barak's adherents—"Faint, yet pursuing?" Who has not frequently said, "*My soul followeth hard after thee*"? —*William Jay.*

Verses 9, 10.—If the psalmist's divine longing was unquenched, so also was his faith; and in the latter part of the psalm he foretells with full assurance the final overthrow of his enemies. Nor did his denunciations fail to meet with a certain accuracy of fulfilment even in the battle by which his own deliverance was effected. The armies encountered in the wood of Ephraim, across the Jordan; there was "a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand men;" "and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured." Thus David's words concerning the "*lower parts of the earth*," and the "*sword*," and the "*foxes*," had not been idly spoken: the pitfalls of the forest, and the swords of the royal pursuers, and the wild beasts that had there made their lairs, all effectually did their work; and the fate of the rebel army was shared by their leader, who, caught in the thick boughs of the oak, pierced through the heart by Joab, and cut down by his attendants, received no further funeral honours than to be cast "into a great pit in the wood," and have a "very great heap of stones" laid upon him to cover him.—*Joseph Francis Thrupp, in "An Introduction to the Study and Use of the Psalms,"* 1860.

Verse 10.—"*They shall fall.*" The word is ordinarily applied to *water*. 2 Sam. xiv. 14; Lam. iii. 49. But here, by the immediate mention of the "*sword*," it is restrained to the *effusion of blood*, and being in the third person plural, in the active sense, it is after the Hebrew idiom to be interpreted in the passive sense, *they shall pour out by the hand of the sword, i.e., they shall be poured out by the sword*, the *hand* of *the sword* being no more than the edge of the sword.—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 10.—"*They shall be a portion for foxes.*" Beasts were given to men for their food, but here men are given to beasts for a prey. A lamentable spectacle to see the vilest of all creatures ravenously feast themselves with the flesh of the noblest, and irrespectively hale and tear in pieces the casket which whilome enclosed the richest jewel in the world. Is it not against the law of nature that men should become beasts' meat; yea, the meat of such beasts as are carrion, and not man's meat? Questionless it is, yet nature giveth her consent to this kind of punishment of unnatural crimes. For it is consonant to reason, that the law of nature should be broken in their punishment who brake it in their sin; that they who devoured men like beasts should be devoured of beasts like men, that they who with their hands offered unnatural violence to their sovereign should suffer the like by the claws and teeth of wild beasts, their slaves; that they who bear a fox in their breast in their life, should be entombed in the belly of a fox at their death.

St. Austin, expounding this whole prophecy of Christ, yieldeth a special reason of this judgment of God by which the Jews were condemned to foxes. The Jews, saith he, therefore killed Christ that they might not lose their country; but, indeed, they therefore lost their country because they killed Christ; because they refused the Lamb and chose Herod the fox before him, therefore by the just retribution of the Almighty, they were allotted to the foxes for their portion. Notwithstanding this allusion of St. Austin to foxes in special, Jansenius and other expositors extend this grant in my text to all wild beasts and fowls which are, as it were, impatient with the fox, and have full power and liberty given them to seize upon the corpses of traitors to God and their country; but foxes bear the name because they abound in those parts where was such store of them, that Samson in a short time, with a wet finger, caught three hundred.—*Daniel Featley, D.D., in "Clavis Mystica,"* 1636.

Verse 10.—"*They shall be a portion for foxes.*" If the body of a human being were to be left on the ground, the *jackals* would certainly leave but little

traces of it; and in the olden times of warfare, they must have held high revelry in the battle-fields after the armies had retired. It is to this propensity of the *jackal* that David refers—himself a man of war, who had fought on many a battle-field, and must have seen the carcasses of the slain mangled by these nocturnal prowlers.—*J. G. Wood.*

Verse 10.—What a doom is that which David pronounces upon those who seek the soul of the righteous to destroy it: "*They shall be a portion for foxes;*" by which *jackals* are meant, as I suppose. These sinister, guilty, woe-begone brutes, when pressed with hunger, gather in gangs among the graves, and yell in rage, and fight like fiends over their midnight orgies; but on the battle-field is their great carnival. Oh! let me never even dream that any one dear to me has *fallen by the sword*, and lies there to be torn, and gnawed at, and dragged about by these hideous howlers.—*W. M. Thomson, D.D., in* "*The Land and the Book*," 1861.

Verse 11.- "*Every one that sweareth by him*," *i.e.*, to David, that comes into his interest, and takes an oath of allegiance to him, shall glory in his success. Or, "*that swears by him*," *i.e.*, by the blessed name of God, and not by any idol. Deut. vi. 15. And then it means all good people that make a sincere and open profession of God's name: they shall glory in God; they shall glory in David's advancement: "They that fear thee will be glad when they see me." They that heartily espouse the cause of Christ, shall glory in its victory at last. "If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him."—*Matthew Henry.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1 (*first clause*).—While the Atheist says, "No God," and the heathen worship "gods many," the true believer says, "O God, thou art my God." He is so, I. By choice. II. By covenant. III. By confession.

Verse 1 (*second clause*).—Seeking God "*early*." I. Early in respect of *life*. II. Early in respect of *diligence*. III. Early in respect of *fervour*. IV. Early in respect of *times* or *continuance*.—*Alexander Shanks.*

Verse 1 (*second clause*).—*Earnest seeking*. That which is longed for will be eagerly sought. 1. The soul is *resolute*. "I *will* seek." 2. The soul is *reasonable*. "I will *seek*." 3. The soul is *ready*. "*Early* will I." 4. The soul is *persevering*. Let this be the resolution and action of both saved and unsaved.—*G. J. K.*

Verse 3.—I. *Love's resolution*. "My lips shall praise thee." 1. *To praise*. This is congenial to the renewed nature. It delights not in grumbling, reproaching, or scolding. Praise expresses appreciation, gratitude, happiness, affection. 2. *To praise God*. 3. *To praise God practically*. "*My lips*." By speaking well *to* him; by speaking well *of* him; of his wisdom, justice, love, grace, etc. 4. *To praise God continually*. "As long as I live," etc. II. *Love's reason*. "Because thy lovingkindness." Love must praise God because—1. It owes its existence to him. "We love him because he first loved us." 2. Because it is fostered by him. "The love of God is shed abroad," etc. 3. Because the expressions of his love demand praise. "Kindness" to needy, helpless, lost. "Lovingkindness," not wounding our natures. "Better than life;" either the principle, pleasures, or pursuits of life.—*G. J. K.*

Verse 3.—"*Thy lovingkindness is better than life*." I. *Love enjoyed with life*. II. *Love compared with life*. III. *Love preferred to life*.—*G. J. K.*

Verses 5, 6.—I. *The empty vessel filled*. How? By meditation. With what? God's goodness as marrow and fatness. To what extent? Satisfaction.

II. *The full vessel running over.* "My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips." The soul overflows with praise—joyful praise.—*G. J. K.*

Verses 5, 6.—Describe the nature of, and show the intimate connection between, (1) the believer's employments and (2) his enjoyments.—*J. S. Bruce.*

Verse 6.—I. Important duties too much neglected: "Remembering God," "Meditating on him." II. Favourable seasons within the reach of all: "Upon my bed;" "In the night watches."—*J. S. B.*

Verse 7.—A well-founded resolve. I. Upon what based. II. How expressed.—*J. S. B.*

Verse 8.—I. *The soul's pursuit after God.* It follows, 1. In desire. 2. In action. 3. Earnestly. 4. Quickly. 5. Closely. II. *The soul's support.* "Thy right hand upholdeth me," the arm of strength. In doing and bearing.—*G. J. K.*

Verse 8.—"A mighty hunter before the Lord." I. The object of pursuit: "Thee." II. The manner of pursuit: "Hard after." III. The dangers encountered.—*J. S. B.*

Verse 8 (*second clause*).—"Thy right hand upholds his people three ways. I. As to *sin*; lest they should fall by it. II. As to *suffering*; lest they should sink under it. III. As to *duty*; lest they should decline from it.—*W. Jay.*

Verses 9, 10.—I. The enemies of the Christian. Evil spirits, evil men, evil habits, etc., etc. II. Their intent. To destroy the soul. III. Their fall. Certain, shameful, destructive. IV. Their future. Hell is reserved for them.—*G. J. K.*

Verse 11.—Three topics. I. Royal rejoicing. II. Lawful swearing. III. Evil speaking.

WORKS UPON THE SIXTY-THIRD PSALM.

CHANDLER'S "*Life of David*" contains an Exposition of this Psalm. Vol. I. pp. 130—4.

"*An Exposition of the LXIII Psalm,*" in eight Sermons, in "*Choice and Practical Expositions on four Select Psalms. . . . .* By THOMAS HORTON, D.D., 1675." [Folio.]

Twelve Sermons [on verses 1—8] *in* "*Sermons on various Practical Subjects.* By ALEXANDER SHANKS [1731—1799], late Minister of the Associate Congregation of Jedburgh. Edinburgh, 1801."

PSALM LXIV.

TITLE.—To the Chief Musician. *The leader of the choir, for the time being, is charged with this song. It were well if the chief musicians of all our congregations estimated their duty at its due solemnity, for it is no mean thing to be called to lead the sacred song of God's people, and the responsibility is by no means light.*

A Psalm of David.—*His life was one of conflict, and very seldom does he finish a Psalm without mentioning his enemies; in this instance his thoughts are wholly occupied with prayer against them.*

DIVISION.—*From* 1—6 *he describes the cruelty and craftiness of his foes, and from* 7—10 *he prophesies their overthrow.*

EXPOSITION.

HEAR my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy.

2 Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity:

3 Who whet their tongue like a sword, *and* bend *their bows to shoot* their arrows, *even* bitter words:

4 That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.

5 They encourage themselves *in* an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?

6 They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward *thought* of every one *of them*, and the heart, *is* deep.

1. "*Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer.*" It often helps devotion if we are able to use the voice and speak audibly; but even mental prayer has a voice with God which he will hear. We do not read that Moses had spoken with his lips at the Red Sea, and yet the Lord said to him, "Why criest thou unto me?" Prayers which are unheard on earth may be among the best heard in heaven. It is our duty to note how constantly David turns to prayer; it is his battleaxe and weapon of war: he uses it under every pressure, whether of inward sin or outward wrath, foreign invasion or domestic rebellion. We shall act wisely if we make prayer to God our first and best trusted resource in every hour of need. "*Preserve my life from fear of the enemy.*" From harm and dread of harm protect me; or it may be read as an expression of his assurance that it would be so; "from fear of the foe thou wilt preserve me." With all our sacrifices of prayer we should offer the salt of faith.

2. "*Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked.*" From their hidden snares hide me. Circumvent their counsels; let their secrets be met by thy secret providence, their counsels of malice by thy counsels of love. "*From the insurrection of the workers of iniquity.*" When their secret counsels break forth into clamorous tumults, be thou still my preserver. When they think evil, let thy divine thoughts defeat them; and when they do evil, let thy powerful justice overthrow them: in both cases, let me be out of reach of their cruel hand, and even out of sight of their evil eye. It is a good thing to conquer malicious foes, but a better thing still to be screened from all conflict with them, by being hidden from the strife. The Lord knows how to give his people peace, and when he wills to make quiet, he is more than a match for

all disturbers, and can defeat alike their deep-laid plots and their overt hostilities.

3. "*Who whet their tongue like a sword.*" Slander has ever been the master weapon of the good man's enemies, and great is the care of the malicious to use it effectively. As warriors grind their swords, to give them an edge which will cut deep and wound desperately, so do the unscrupulous invent falsehoods which shall be calculated to inflict pain, to stab the reputation, to kill the honour of the righteous. What is there which an evil tongue will not say? What misery will it not labour to inflict? "*And bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words.*" Far off they dart their calumnies, as archers shoot their poisoned arrows. They studiously and with force prepare their speech as bended bows, and then with cool, deliberate aim, they let fly the shaft which they have dipped in bitterness. To sting, to inflict anguish, to destroy, is their one design. Insult, sarcasm, taunting defiance, nicknaming, all these were practised among Orientals as a kind of art; and if in these Western regions, with more refined manners, we are less addicted to the use of rough abuse, it is yet to be feared that the less apparent venom of the tongue inflicts none the less poignant pain. However, in all cases, let us fly to the Lord for help. David had but the one resource of prayer against the twofold weapons of the wicked, for defence against sword or arrow he used the one defence of faith in God.

4. "*That they may shoot in secret at the perfect.*" They lie in ambush, with bows ready bent to aim a coward's shaft at the upright man. Sincere and upright conduct will not secure us from the assaults of slander. The devil shot at our Lord himself, and we may rest assured he has a fiery dart in reserve for us; He was absolutely perfect, we are only so in a relative sense, hence in us there is fuel for fiery darts to kindle on. Observe the meanness of malicious men; they will not accept fair combat, they shun the open field, and skulk in the bushes, lying in ambush against those who are not so acquainted with deceit as to suspect their treachery, and are too manly to imitate their despicable modes of warfare. "*Suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.*" To secrecy they add suddenness. They give their unsuspecting victim no chance of defending himself; they pounce on him like a wild beast leaping on its prey. They lay their plans so warily that they fear no detection. We have seen in daily life the arrow of calumny wounding its victim sorely; and yet we have not been able to discover the quarter from which the weapon was shot, nor to detect the hand which forged the arrowhead, or tinged it with the poison. Is it possible for justice to invent a punishment sufficiently severe to meet the case of the dastard who defiles my good name, and remains himself in concealment? An open liar is an angel compared with this demon. Vipers and cobras are harmless and amiable creatures compared with such a reptile. The devil himself might blush at being the father of so base an offspring.

5. "*They encourage themselves in an evil matter.*" Good men are frequently discouraged, and not unfrequently discourage one another, but the children of darkness are wise in their generation and keep their spirits up, and each one has a cheering word to say to his fellow villain. Anything by which they can strengthen each other's hands in their one common design they resort to; their hearts are thoroughly in their black work. "*They commune of laying snares privily.*" Laying their heads together they count and recount their various devices, so as to come at some new and masterly device. They know the benefit of co-operation, and are not sparing in it; they pour their experience into one common fund, they teach each other fresh methods. "*They say, Who shall see them?*" So sedulously do they mask their attacks, that they defy discovery; their pitfalls are too well hidden, and their lives too carefully concealed to be found out. So they think, but they forget the all-seeing eye, and the all-discovering hand, which are ever guided by those [illegible] plots are usually laid bare. As in the Gunpowder Plot, there is usually a breakdown somewhere or other;

among the conspirators themselves truth finds an ally, or the stones of the field cry out against them. Let no Christian be in bondage through fear of deep-laid Jesuitical schemes, for surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, nor divination against Israel; the toils of the net are broken, the arrows of the bow are snapped, the devices of the wicked are foiled. Therefore, fear not, ye tremblers; for the Lord is at your right hand, and ye shall not be hurt of the enemy.

6. "*They search out iniquities.*" Diligently they consider, invent, devise, and seek for wicked plans to wreak their malice. These are no common villains, but explorers in iniquity, inventors and concoctors of evil. Sad indeed it is that to ruin a good man the evil-disposed will often show as much avidity as if they were searching after treasure. The Inquisition could display instruments of torture, revealing as much skill as the machinery of our modern exhibitions. The deep places of history, manifesting most the skill of the human mind, are those in which revenge has arranged diplomacy, and used intrigue to compass its diabolical purposes. "*They accomplish a diligent search.*" Their design is perfected, consummated, and brought into working order. They cry "Eureka;" they have sought and found the sure method of vengeance. Exquisite are the refinements of malice! hell's craft furnishes inspiration to the *artistes* who fashion deceit. Earth and the places under it are ransacked for the *materiel* of war, and profound skill turns all to account. "*Both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep.*" No superficial wit is theirs; but sagacity, sharpened by practice and keen hatred. Wicked men have frequently the craft to hasten slowly, to please in order to ruin, to flatter that ere long they may devour, to bow the knee that they may ultimately crush beneath their foot. He who deals with the serpent's seed has good need of the wisdom which is from above: the generation of vipers twist and turn, wind and wriggle, yet evermore they are set upon their purpose, and go the nearest way to it when they wander round about. Alas! how dangerous is the believer's condition, and how readily may he be overcome if left to himself. This is the complaint of reason and the moan of unbelief. When faith comes in, we see that even in all this the saints are still secure, for they are all in the hands of God.

7 But God shall shoot at them *with* an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.

8 So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away.

9 And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing.

10 The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.

7. "*But God shall shoot at them with an arrow.*" They shot, and shall be shot. A greater archer than they are shall take sure aim at their hearts. One of his arrows shall be enough, for he never misses his aim. The Lord turns the tables on his adversaries, and defeats them at their own weapons. "*Suddenly shall they be wounded.*" They were looking to surprise the saint, but, lo! they are taken at unawares themselves; they desired to inflict deadly wounds, and are smitten themselves with wounds which none can heal. While they were bending their bows, the great Lord had prepared his bow already, and he let slip the shaft when least they looked for such an unsparing messenger of justice. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." The righteous need not learn the arts of self-defence or of attack, their avengement is in better hands than their own.

8. "*So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves.*" Their slander shall recoil. Their curses shall come home to roost. Their tongue shall cut their throats. It was both sword and bow and arrow; it shall be

turned against them, and bring home to them full punishment. "*All that see them shall flee away.*" Afraid, both of them and their overthrow, their former friends shall give them wide space, lest they perish with them. Who cares to go near to Herod when the worms are eating him? or to be in the same chariot with Pharaoh when the waves roar round him? Those who crowded around a powerful persecutor, and cringed at his feet, are among the first to desert him in the day of wrath. Woe unto you, ye liars! Who will desire fellowship with you in your seething lake of fire?

9. "*And all men shall fear.*" They shall be filled with awe by the just judgments of God, as the Canaanites were by the overthrow of Pharaoh at the Red Sea. Those who might have been bold in sin shall be made to tremble and to stand in awe of the righteous Judge. "*And shall declare the work of God.*" It shall become the subject of general conversation. So strange, so pointed, so terrible shall be the Lord's overthrow of the malicious, that it shall be spoken of in all companies. They sinned secretly, but their punishment shall be wrought before the face of the sun. "*For they shall wisely consider of his doing.*" The judgments of God are frequently so clear and manifest that men cannot mis-read them, and if they have any thought at all, they must extract the true teaching from them. Some of the divine judgments are a great deep, but in the case of malicious persecutors the matter is plain enough, and the most illiterate can understand.

10. "*The righteous shall be glad in the Lord.*" Admiring his justice and fully acquiescing in its displays, they shall also rejoice at the rescue of injured innocence yet, their joy shall not be selfish or sensual, but altogether in reference to the Lord. "*And shall trust in him.*" Their observation of providence shall increase their faith; since he who fulfils his threatenings will not forget his promises. "*And all the upright in heart shall glory.*" The victory of the oppressed shall be the victory of all upright men; the whole host of the elect shall rejoice in the triumph of virtue. While strangers fear, the children are glad in view of their Father's power and justice. That which alarms the evil, cheers the good. Lord God of mercy, grant to us to be preserved from all our enemies, and saved in thy Son with an everlasting salvation.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—This Psalm is applied by R. Obadiah to Haman and Mordecai. The enemy is Haman, the perfect man shot at is Mordecai; about whom Haman communed with his friends to lay snares for him, and search diligently for occasions against him and his people, which issued in his own destruction. The ancient Midrash of the Jews applies it to Daniel, when cast into the den of lions; and Jarchi supposes that David, by a spirit of prophecy, foresaw it, and prayed for him who was of his seed; and that everything in the Psalm beautifully falls in with that account. Daniel is the perfect man aimed at; the enemy are the princes of Darius's court, who consulted against him, communed of laying snares for him, and gained their point, which proved their own ruin. But the Psalm literally belongs to David, by whom it was composed. *John Gill.*

Whole Psalm.—A cry of God's elect, when persecuted for righteousness' sake, to their Deliverer and sure Avenger. The general principle stated is very clear. The Psalm will adjust itself, as an experimental utterance, to the lips of Christian faith wherever brought into contact with the evil forces of the prince of this world, so as to suffer affliction for the gospel's sake; for it expresses the condition and the hope of one actually in conflict for the truth. How aptly a portion of this Psalm applies to the sufferings Israel Himself in the days of his affliction, when, pierced in his spirit by lying words, he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, needs not be pointed out.—*Arthur Pridham, in "Notes and Reflections on the Psalms,"* 1869.

Verse 1.—"*Preserve my life.*" Hebrew, *lives*: so called for the many faculties, operations, revolutions, and commodities of life.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 3.—"*Who whet their tongue,*" etc. The verb means, says Parkhurst, "to whet, sharpen," which is performed by *reiterated* motion or friction; and by a beautiful metaphor it is applied to a wicked tongue. It has, however, been rendered "*vibrate,*" as it is certain a serpent does his tongue.—*Richard Mant.*

Verse 3.—The ingenuity of man has been wonderfully tasked and exercised in two things, inventing destructive weapons of war, and devising various methods of ruining men by wicked words. The list of the former is found in military writings. But the various forms of evil speaking can hardly be catalogued. Evil speakers have arrows, sharp, barbed, dipped in poison. They have "swords, flaming swords, two-edged swords, drawn swords, drawn in anger, with which they cut, and wound, and kill the good name of their neighbour." Sins of the tongue are commonly very cruel. When slander is secret, as it commonly is, you cannot defend yourself from its assaults. Its canons are infernal. One of them is, "If a lie will do better than the truth, tell a lie." Another is, "Heap on reproach; some of it will stick."—*William S. Plumer.*

Verses 3, 4.—We saw in the Museum at Venice an instrument with which one of the old Italian tyrants was accustomed to shoot poisoned needles at the objects of his wanton malignity. We thought of gossips, backbiters, and secret slanderers, and wished that their mischievous devices might come to a speedy end. Their weapons of innuendo, shrug, and whisper, appear to be as insignificant as needles; but the venom which they instil is deadly to many a reputation.—*C. H. Spurgeon, in "Feathers for Arrows; or, Illustrations for Preachers and Teachers,"* 1870.

Verses 3, 4.—David, upon sad experience, compareth a wicked, reviling tongue to three fatal weapons—a *razor*, a *sword*, and an *arrow*. To a *razor*, such a one as will take off every little hair: so a reviling tongue will not only take advantage of every gross sin committed by others, but those peccadilloes, the least infirmities which others better qualified cannot so much as discern; secondly, to a *sword* that wounds: so the tongues of reproaching men cut deeply into the credits and reputations of their brethren, but a sword doth mischief only near hand, not afar off; and, therefore, it is in the third place compared to an *arrow*, that can hit at a distance: and so revilers do not ill offices to those only in the parish or town where they live, but to others far remote. How much, then, doth it concern every man to walk circumspectly; to give no just cause of reproach, not to make himself a scorn to the fools of the world; but, if they will reproach (as certainly they will), let it be for forwardness in God's ways, and not for sin, that so the reproach may fall upon their own heads, and their scandalous language into their own throats.—*Jeremiah Burroughs.*

Verses 3, 7, 8.—The most mischievous weapons of the wicked are *words*, "even bitter words;" but *the Word* is the chief weapon of the Holy Spirit: and as with this sword the great Captain foiled the tempter in the wilderness, so may we vanquish "the workers of iniquity" with the true Jerusalem blade.—*J. L. K.*

Verse 4.—"*That they may shoot in secret.*" The wicked are said to shoot their arrows *in secret* at the perfect; and then "they say, Who shall see them?" verse 5. Thus Satan lets fly a temptation so secretly, that he is hardly suspected in the thing. Sometimes he useth a wife's tongue to do his errand; another while he gets behind the back of a husband, friend, servant, etc., and is not seen all the while he is doing his work. Who would have thought to have found a devil in Peter, tempting his Master, or suspected that Abraham should be his instrument to betray his beloved wife into the hands of a sin? yet it was so. Nay, sometimes he is so secret, that he borrows God's bow to shoot his arrows from, and the poor Christian is abused, thinking it is

God chides and is angry, when it is the devil tempts him to think so, and only counterfeits God's voice.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 6.—"*They search out iniquities*," etc. It is a sign that malice boils up to a great height in men's hearts, when they are so active to find matter against their neighbours. Love would rather not see or hear of others' failings; or if it doth and must, busieth itself in healing and reforming them to the utmost of its power.—*John Milward* (—1684), *in* "*Morning Exercises.*"

Verse 7.—"*With an arrow suddenly.*" As was Ahab, and the rich fool (Luke xii.): while he sat pruning himself like a bird on a bough, death fetch'd him off suddenly by his shaft, shot at him, and down he came tumbling. See 1 Thess. v. 3.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 8 *(first clause).*

> In these cases,
> We still have judgment here, that we but teach
> Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
> To plague the inventor: This even-handed justice
> Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
> To our own lips.
>
> *William Shakspere.*

Verse 8.—"*Their own tongue to fall upon themselves.*" That is, their own words shall be brought as a testimony against them, and condemn them. "The tongue is a little member" (saith the apostle James, ch. iii. 5), and therefore a light member; yet it falls heavy, as heavy as lead. A man were better have his house fall upon him, than that, in this sense, his tongue should fall upon him. Some have been pressed to death because they would not speak, but stood mute before the judge; but more have been pressed to death by their sinful freedom, or rather licentiousness in speaking; this hath brought them to judgment, and cast them in judgment. . . . . A strange thing, that the fall of a man's tongue should oppress his body and whole estate; yet so it is, the weight of a man's tongue falling upon him crushes him to powder.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 8.—"*Their own tongue to fall upon themselves.*" The arrows of idle words, though shot out of sight, and possibly quite forgotten, will hereafter drop down upon the heads of such as drew the bow. Words are but wind, is the common saying, but they are such wind as will either blow the soul to its haven of rest, if holy, wholesome, savoury, spiritual, and tending to edification, or else sink it into the Dead Sea and bottomless gulf of eternal misery, if idle, prophane, frothy, and unprofitable.—*Edward Reyner* (1600—1670), *in* "*Rules for the Government of the Tongue.*"

Verse 10.—"*The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in him.*" That is, if they have failed in their trust heretofore, and not given God honour by confiding in him, yet these wonderful works of God (of which he speaks in the Psalm) work this hope.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 10.—"*All the upright in heart.*" The word of this text, *jashar*, signifies *rectitudinem*, and *planitiem*, it signifies a direct way; for the devil's way was circular, compassing the earth; but the angel's way to heaven upon Jacob's ladder was a straight, a direct way. And then it signifies, as a direct and straight, so a plain, a smooth, an even way, a way that hath been beaten into a path before, a way that the fathers and the church have walked in before, and not a discovery made by our curiosity, or our confidence, in venturing from ourselves, or embracing from others, new doctrines and opinions. The persons, then, whom God proposes to be partakers of his retributions, are first, *recti* (that is, both direct men, and plain men), and then, *recti corde*, this qualification, this straightness and smoothness must be in the heart; all the upright in heart shall have it. Upon this earth, a man cannot possibly make

one step in a straight and a direct line. The earth itself being round, every step we make upon it must necessarily be a segment, an arc of a circle. But yet, though no piece of a circle be a straight line, yet if we take any piece, nay, if we take the whole circle, there is no corner, no angle in any place, in any entire circle. A perfect rectitude we cannot have in any way in this world; in every calling there are some inevitable temptations. But, though we cannot make up one circle of a straight line (that is impossible to human frailty), yet we may pass on without angles and corners, that is, without disguises in our religion, and without the love of craft, and falsehood, and circumvention, in our civil actions. A compass is a necessary thing in a ship, and the help of that compass brings the ship home safe, and yet that compass hath some variations, it doth not look directly north; neither is that star which we call the north-pole, or by which we know the north-pole, the very pole itself; but we call it so, and we make our uses of it, and our conclusions by it, as if it were so, because it is the nearest star to that pole. He that comes as near uprightness as infirmities admit, is an upright man, though he have some obliquities. —*John Donne.*

Verse 10.—"*All the upright in heart shall glory.*" The Psalm began in the first person singular, "Hear my voice, O God," but it ends by comprehending all the righteous. He who is most anxious about his own salvation will be found to be the man of the truest and widest love to others; while, he who talks most of unselfishness in religion is generally the most selfish. We cannot take a more efficient method for benefiting others than by being earnestly prayerful for ourselves that we may be preserved from sin. Our example will in itself be useful, and our godliness, by putting power into our testimony, will increase the value of every rebuke, exhortation, or encouragement we may utter. Our sin is or will be the church's sorrow, and the way to make all the upright rejoice is to be upright ourselves.— *C. H. S.*

Verse 10.—"*Shall glory.*" This retribution is expressed in the original in the word *halal;* and *halal*, to those translators that made up our Book of Common Prayer, presented the signification of gladness, for so it is there: "*They shall be glad.*" So it did to the translators that came after, for there it is, "*They shall rejoice;*" and to our last translators it seemed to signify glory, "*They shall glory,*" say they. But the first translation of all into our language (which was long before any of these three), calls it *praise*, and puts it into the passive: "*All men of rightful heart shall be praised.*" And so truly *jithhalelu*, in the original, bears it, nay, requires it; which is not of praise which they shall give to God, but of a praise that they shall receive for having served God with an upright heart; not that they shall praise God in doing so, but that godly men shall praise them for having done so. All this will grow naturally out of the root; for the root of this word is *lucere, splendere*, to shine out in the eyes of men, and to create in them a holy and a reverential admiration; as it was John Baptist's praise, that he was "*A burning and a shining lamp.*" Properly it is, by a good and a holy exemplary life, to occasion others to set a right value upon holiness, and to give a due respect for holy men. . . . . "*Shall glory.*" It is so far from diminishing this glory, as that it exalts our consolation that God places this retribution in the future; if they do not yet, certainly they *shall* glory, and if they do now, that glory shall not go out, still they shall, they shall for ever glory.— *John Donne.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—I. *The preservation of life desired.* 1. The desire expressed. 2. Qualified—from violent death, from fear of, etc. II. *The preservation of life prayed for.* 1. For self-improvement 2. For usefulness. 3. For the divine glory.— *G. R.*

Verse 2 (*first clause*).—Applied to Satan. I. *The danger considered.* 1. The enemy, wicked, mighty, malicious, experienced. 2. His counsel. He tempts cunningly, and with deliberation. 3. The secrecy of it. He may be exciting others against me, or sowing evil in myself. II. *The deliverance implored.* "Hide me." 1. Keep me from being tempted. 2. Keep me from evil when tempted. 3. Bring me out of it all unharmed. 4. Meanwhile, let me be in thy secret place. III. *The consolation of faith.* 1. God does preserve praying ones. 2. Our enemy is *his* enemy. 3. He has preserved us. 4. We are his own. 5. His honour is involved.

Verse 3.—"*Bitter words.*" An excellent topic in reference both to the sinner and to professed saints.

Verse 3.—*The whetting of the tongue.* Fresh faults discovered, evil motives imputed, exaggerations invented, lies forged, mischiefs suggested, old slanders furbished, and ancient hatreds rekindled.

Verse 5.—The mutual encouragements of sinners a rebuke to professors who dishearten each other.

Verse 6 (*two first clauses*).—The fault-hunter; his motive, his character, his pretences, and his punishment.

Verse 9.—I. *The subject for consideration.*—Judgments upon the wicked. 1. As judgments. 2. As judgments from God—that work of God—his doing. II. *The consideration of the subject.* 1. They are intended to be considered by others. 1. They are to be considered wisely. III. *The effect of this consideration.* 1. Fear of God. 2. Praise to God; shall declare, etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 10.—I. *The persons.* 1. What they are, in distinction from others; the righteous; the justified. 2. What they are in themselves; upright in heart; not perfect, but sincere. II. *Their privilege.* 1. Amidst all their persecutions to joy in God. 2. Amidst all their dangers to trust in God.—*G. R.*

Verses 9, 10.—I. An act of God; something of his doing. II. Its effect upon men in general: "*All men shall fear, and shall declare,*" etc. III. A special duty resulting from it, incumbent on *good men*: "*The righteous,*" etc.—*H. Dove.*

PSALM LXV.

TITLE.—*This title is very similar to many we have before studied.* To the Chief Musician. *It is consigned to the care of the usual overseer of song. When a man does his work well, there is no use in calling in others for novelty's sake.* A Psalm *and* Song of David. *The Hebrew calls it a* Shir and Mizmor, *a combination of psalm and song, which may be best described by the term, "A Lyrical Poem." In this case the psalm may be said or sung, and be equally suitable. We have had two such Psalms before, Psalms XXX. and XLVIII., and we have now the first of a little series of four following each other. It was meet that Psalms of pleading and longing should be followed by hymns of praise.*

SUBJECT AND DIVISIONS.—*David sings of the glory of God in his church, and in the fields of nature: here is the song both of grace and providence. It may be that he intended hereby to commemorate a remarkably plentiful harvest, or to compose a harvest hymn for all ages. It appears to have been written after a violent rebellion had been quelled, verse* 7, *and foreign enemies had been subdued by signal victory, verse* 8. *It is one of the most delightful hymns in any language.*

We shall view in the first four verses the way of approach to God, then from 5 *to* 8 *we shall see the Lord in answer to prayer performing wonders for which he is praised, and then from* 9—13 *we shall sing the special harvest-song.*

EXPOSITION.

PRAISE waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed.

2 O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.

3 Iniquities prevail against me: *as for* our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.

4 Blessed *is the man whom* thou choosest, and causest to approach *unto thee, that* he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, *even* of thy holy temple.

1. "*Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion.*" Though Babylon adores Antichrist, Zion remains faithful to her King; to him, and to him only, she brings her perpetual oblation of worship. Those who have seen in Zion the blood of sprinkling, and know themselves to belong to the church of the firstborn, can never think of her without presenting humble praise to Zion's God; his mercies are too numerous and precious to be forgotten. The praises of the saints wait for a signal from the divine Lord, and when he shows his face they burst forth at once. Like a company of musicians gathered to welcome and honour a prince, who wait till he makes his appearance, so do we reserve our best praises till the Lord reveals himself in the assembly of his saints; and, indeed, till he shall descend from heaven in the day of his appearing. Praise also waits like a servant or courtier in the royal halls—gratitude is humble and obedient. Praise attends the Lord's pleasure, and continues to bless him, whether he shows tokens of present favour or no; she is not soon wearied, but all through the night she sings on in sure hope that the morning cometh. We shall continue to wait on, tuning our harps, amid the tears of earth; but O what harmonies will those be which we will pour forth, when the home-bringing is come, and the King shall appear in his glory. The passage may be rendered "praise is silent for thee;" it is calm, peaceful, and ready to adore thee in

quietness. Or, it may mean, our praise is but silence compared with thy deservings, O God. Or, in solemn silence we worship thee, because our praise cannot be uttered; accept, therefore, our silence as praise. Or, we are so engrossed in thy praise, that to all other things we are dumb; we have no tongue for anything but thee. Perhaps the poet best expressed the thought of the psalmist when he said—

"A sacred reverence checks our songs,
And praise sits silent on our tongues."

Certainly, when the soul is most filled with adoring awe, she is least content with her own expressions, and feels most deeply how inadequate are all mortal songs to proclaim the divine goodness. A church, bowed into silent adoration by a personal sense of divine mercy, would certainly offer more real praise than the sweetest voices aided by pipes and strings; yet, vocal music is not to be neglected, for this sacred hymn was meant to be sung. It is well before singing to have the soul placed in a waiting attitude, and to be humbly conscious that our best praise is but silence compared with Jehovah's glory.

"*And unto thee shall the vow be performed.*" Perhaps a special vow made during a season of draught and political danger. Nations and churches must be honest and prompt in redeeming their promises to the Lord, who cannot be mocked with impunity. So, too, must individuals. We are not to forget our vows, or to redeem them to be seen of men—*unto God* alone must they be performed, with a single eye to his acceptance. Believers are all under covenant, which they made at conversion, and have renewed upon being baptised, joining the church, and coming to the table, and some of them are under special pledges which they entered into under peculiar circumstances: these are to be piously and punctually fulfilled. We ought to be very deliberate in promising, and very punctilious in performing. A vow unkept will burn the conscience like a hot iron. Vows of service, of donation, of praise, or whatever they may be, are no trifles: and in the day of gratitude praise they should without fail, be fulfilled to the utmost of our power.

2. "*O thou that hearest prayer.*" This is thy name, thy nature, thy glory God not only has heard, but is now hearing prayer, and always must hear prayer: since he is an immutable being, and never changes in his attributes. What a delightful title for the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Every right and sincere prayer is surely heard as it is offered. Here the psalmist brings in the personal pronoun "*thou*," and we beg the reader to notice how often "thou," "thee," and "thy," occur in this hymn; David evidently believed in a personal God, and did not adore a mere idea or abstraction.

"*Unto thee shall all flesh come.*" This shall encourage men of all nations to become suppliants to the one and only God, who proves his Deity by answering those who seek his face. Flesh they are, and therefore weak, frail and sinful they need to pray; and thou art such a God as they need, for thou art touched with compassion, and dost condescend to hear the cries of poor flesh and blood. Many come to thee now in humble faith, and are filled with good, but more shall be drawn to thee by the attractiveness of thy love, and at length the whole earth shall bow at thy feet. To come to God is the life of true religion: we come weeping in conversion, hoping in supplication, rejoicing in praise, and delighting in service. False gods must in due time lose their deluded votaries, for man when enlightened will not be longer befooled; but each one who tries the true God is encouraged by his own success to persuade others also, and so the kingdom of God comes to men.

"*Iniquities prevail against me.*" Others accuse and slander me, and in addition my own sins rise up and would beget me to my confusion, were it not for the remembrance of the atonement which covers every one of my iniquities. Our sins would, but for grace, prevail against us in the court of divine justice, in the court of conscience, and in the battle of life. Unhappy is the man who despises these enemies, and worse still is he who counts them as his friends! He is best instructed who knows their deadly power, and flies for refuge to him who

pardons iniquity. "*As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.*" Thou dost cover them all, for thou hast provided a covering propitiation, a mercy-seat which wholly covers thy law. Note the word "*our*," the faith of the one penitent who speaks for himself in the first clause, here embraces all the faithful in Zion; and he is so persuaded of the largeness of forgiving love that he leads all the saints to sing of the blessing. What a comfort that iniquities which prevail against us, do not prevail against God. They would keep us away from God, but he sweeps them away from before himself and us; they are too strong for us, but not for our Redeemer, who is mighty, yea, and almighty to save. It is worthy of note that as the priest washed in the laver before he sacrificed, so David leads us to obtain purification from sin before we enter upon the service of song. When we have washed our robes and made them white in his blood, then shall we acceptably sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

4. "*Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee.*" After cleansing comes benediction, and truly this is a very rich one. It comprehends both election, effectual calling, access, acceptance, and sonship. First, we are chosen of God, according to the good pleasure of his will, and this alone is blessedness. Then, since we cannot and will not come to God of ourselves, he works graciously in us, and attracts us powerfully; he subdues our unwillingness, and removes our inability by the almighty workings of his transforming grace. This also is no slight blessedness. Furthermore, we, by his divine drawings, are made nigh by the blood of his Son, and brought near by his Spirit, into intimate fellowship; so that we have access with boldness, and are no longer as those who are afar off by wicked works: here also is unrivalled blessedness. To crown all, we do not come nigh in peril of dire destruction, as Nadab and Abihu did, but we approach as chosen and accepted ones, to become dwellers in the divine household: this is heaped-up blessedness, vast beyond conception. But dwelling in the house we are treated as sons, for the servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the son abideth ever. Behold what manner of love and blessedness the Father has bestowed upon us that we may dwell in his house, and go no more out for ever. Happy men who dwell at home with God. May both writer and reader be such men. "*That he may dwell in thy courts.*" Acceptance leads to abiding: God does not make a temporary choice, or give and take; his gifts and calling are without repentance. He who is once admitted to God's courts shall inhabit them for ever; he shall be

> "No more a stranger or a guest,
> But like a child at home."

Permanence gives preciousness. Terminating blessings are but half-blessings. To dwell in the courts of the Great King is to be ennobled; to dwell there for ever is to be emparadised: yet such is the portion of every man whom God has chosen and caused to approach unto him, though once his iniquities prevailed against him.

5 *By* terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation; *who art* the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off *upon* the sea:

6 Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; *being* girded with power:

7 Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.

8 They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens: thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.

5. "*By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation.*" God's memorial is that he hears prayer, and his glory is that he

answers it in a manner fitted to inspire awe in the hearts of his people. The saints, in the commencement of the Psalm, offered praise in reverential silence; and now, in the like awe-stricken spirit, they receive answers to their prayers. The direct allusion here is, no doubt, to the Lord's overthrow of the enemies of his people in ways calculated to strike terror into all beholders; his judgments in their severe righteousness were calculated to excite fear both among friends and foes. Who would not fear a God whose blows are so crushing? We do not always know what we are asking for when we pray; when the answer comes, the veritable answer, it is possible that we may be terrified by it. We seek sanctification, and trial will be the reply: we ask for more faith, and more affliction is the result: we pray for the spread of the gospel, and persecution scatters us. Nevertheless, it is good to ask on, for nothing which the Lord grants in his love can do us any harm. Terrible things will turn out to be blessed things after all, when they come in answer to prayer.

See in this verse how righteousness and salvation are united, the terrible things with the gracious answers. Where but in Jesus could they be blended? The God who saves may answer our prayers in a way which puts unbelief into a flutter; but when faith spies the Saviour, she remembers that "things are not what they seem," and she is of good courage. He who is terrible is also our refuge from terror when we see him in the Well-beloved. "*Who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth.*" The dwellers in the far-off isles trust in God; those most remote from Zion yet confide in the ever living Jehovah. Even those who dwell in countries, frozen or torrid, where nature puts on her varied terrors, and those who see dread wonders on the deep, yet fly from the terrors of God and place their confidence in the God of terrors. His arm is strong to smite, but also strong to save. "*And of them that are afar off upon the sea.*" Both elements have their elect bands of believers. If the land gave Moses elders, the sea gave Jesus apostles. Noah, when all was ocean, was as calm with God as Abraham in his tent. All men are equally dependent upon God: the seafaring man is usually most conscious of this, but in reality he is not more so than the husbandman, nor the husbandman than anyone else. There is no room for self-confidence on land or sea, since God is the only true confidence of men on earth or ocean. Faith is a plant of universal growth, it is a tree of life on shore and a plant of renown at sea; and, blessed be God, those who exercise faith in him anywhere shall find that he is swift and strong to answer their prayers. A remembrance of this should quicken our devotions when we approach unto the Lord our God.

6. "*Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains.*" He, as it were, fixed them in their sockets, and preserved them from falling by earthquake or storm. The firmest owe their stability to him. Philosophers of the forget-God school are too much engrossed with their laws of upheaval to think of the Upheaver. Their theories of volcanic action and glacier action, &c., &c., are frequently used as bolts and bars to shut the Lord out of his own world. Our poet is of another mind, and sees God's hand settling Alps and Andes on their bases, and therefore he sings in his praise. Let me for ever be just such an unphilosophic simpleton as David was, for he was nearer akin to Solomon than any of our modern theorists. "*Being girded with power.*" The Lord is so himself, and he therefore casts a girdle of strength around the hills, and there they stand, braced, belted, and bulwarked with his might. The poetry is such as would naturally suggest itself to one familiar with mountain scenery; power everywhere meets you, sublimity, massive grandeur, and stupendous force are all around you; and God is there, the author and source of all.

Let us learn that we poor puny ones, if we wish for true establishment, must go to the strong for strength. Without him, the everlasting hills would crumble; how much more shall all our plans, projects, and labours come to decay. Repose, O believer, where the mountains find their bases—viz., in the undiminished might of the Lord God.

7. "*Which stilleth the noise of the seas.*" His soft breath smooths the sea

into a glass, and the mountainous waves into ripples. God does this. Calms are of the God of peace: it needs not that we look for a hurricane when it is said that he cometh. He walked of old in the garden in the cool of the day; he is resting even now, for his great seventh day is not yet over, and he is always "the Lord and giver of peace." Let mariners magnify the God who rules the waves. "*The noise of their waves.*" Each separate brawler amid the riot of the storm is quieted by the divine voice. "*And the tumult of the people.*" Nations are as difficult to rule as the sea itself, they are as fitful, treacherous, restless, and furious; they will not brook the bridle nor be restrained by laws. Canute had not a more perilous seat by the rising billows than many a king and emperor has had when the multitude have been set on mischief, and have grown weary of their lords. God alone is King of nations. The sea obeys him, and the yet more tumultuous nations are kept in check by him. Human society owes its preservation to the continued power of God: evil passions would secure its instant dissolution; envy, ambition, and cruelty would create anarchy to-morrow, if God did not prevent; whereof we have had clear proof in the various French revolutions. Glory be unto God who maintains the fabric of social order, and checks the wicked, who would fain overthrow all things. The child of God in seasons of trouble should fly at once to him who stills the seas: nothing is too hard for him.

8. "*They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens.*" Signs of God's presence are not few, nor confined to any one region. Zembla sees them as well as Zion, and Terra del Fuego as surely as the Terra Sacra. These tokens are sometimes terrible phenomena in nature—such as earthquake, pestilence, tornado, or storm; and when these are seen, even the most barbarous people tremble before God. At other times they are dread works of providence—such as the overthrow of Sodom, and the destruction of Pharaoh. The rumour of these judgments travels to earth's utmost verge, and impresses all people with a fear and trembling at such a just and holy God. We bless God that we are not afraid but rejoice at his tokens; with solemn awe we are glad when we behold his mighty acts. We fear, but not with slavish fear. "*Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.*" East and west are made happy by God's favour to the dwellers therein. Our rising hours are bright with hope, and our evening moments mellow with thanksgiving. Whether the sun go forth or come in we bless God and rejoice in the gates of the day. When the fair morning blushes with the rosy dawn we rejoice; and when the calm evening smiles restfully we rejoice still. We do not believe that the dew weeps the death of the day; we only see jewels bequeathed by the departing day for its successor to gather up from the earth. Faith, when she sees God, rounds the day with joy. She cannot fast, because the bridegroom is with her. Night and day are alike to her, for the same God made them and blessed them. She would have no rejoicing if God did not make her glad; but, blessed be his name, he never ceases to make joy for those who find their joy in him.

9 Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, *which* is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it.

10 Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof.

11 Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness.

12 They drop *upon* the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side.

13 The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.

9. "*Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it.*" God's visits leave a blessing behind; this is more than can be said of every visitor. When the Lord goes on visitations of mercy, he has abundance of necessary things for all his needy creatures. He is represented here as going round the earth, as a gardener surveys his garden, and as giving water to every plant that requires it, and that not in small quantities, but until the earth is drenched and soaked with a rich supply of refreshment. O Lord, in this manner visit thy church, and my poor, parched, and withering piety. Make thy grace to overflow towards my graces; water me, for no plant of thy garden needs it more.

> "My stock lies dead, and no increase
> Doth my dull husbandry improve;
> O let thy graces without cease
> Drop from above."

"*Thou greatly enrichest it.*" Millions of money could not so much enrich mankind as the showers do. The soil is made rich by the rain, and then yields its riches to man; but God is the first giver of all. How truly rich are those who are enriched with grace; this is great riches. "*With the river of God, which is full of water.* The brooks of earth are soon dried up, and all human resources, being finite, are liable to failure; but God's provision for the supply of rain is inexhaustible; there is no bottom or shore to his river. The deluge poured from the clouds yesterday may be succeeded by another to-morrow, and yet the waters above the firmament shall not fail. How true is this in the realm of grace there 'the river of God is full of water," and "of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." The ancients in their fables spake of Pactolus, which flowed over sands of gold; but this river of God, which flows above and from which the rain is poured, is far more enriching; for, after all, the wealth of men lies mainly in the harvest of their fields, without which even gold would be of no value whatever. "*Thou preparest them corn.*" Corn is specially set apart to be the food of man. In its various species it is a divine provision for the nutriment of our race, and is truly called the staff of life. We hear in commerce of "prepared corn-flour," but God prepared it long before man touched it. As surely as the manna was prepared of God for the tribes, so certainly is corn made and sent by God for our daily use. What is the difference whether we gather wheat-ears or manna, and what matters it if the first comes upward to us, and the second downward? God is as much present beneath as above; it is as great a marvel that food should rise out of the dust, as that it should fall from the skies. "*When thou hast so provided for it.*" When all is prepared to produce corn, the Lord puts the finishing stroke, and the grain is forthcoming; not even, when all the material is prepared, will the wheat be perfected without the continuous and perfecting operation of the Most High. Blessed be the Great Householder; he does not suffer the harvest to fail, he supplies the teeming myriads of earth with bread enough from year to year. Even thus does he vouchsafe heavenly food to his redeemed ones: "He hath given meat unto them that fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant."

10. "*Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof.*" Ridge and furrow are drenched. The ridges beaten down and settled, and the furrows made to stand like gutters flooded to the full. "*Thou makest it soft with showers.*" The drought turned the clods into iron, but the plenteous showers dissolve and loosen the soil. "*Thou blessest the springing thereof.*" Vegetation enlivened by the moisture leaps into vigour, the seed germinates and sends forth its green shoot, and the smell is as that of a field which the Lord has blessed. All this may furnish us with a figure of the operations of the Holy Spirit in beating down high thoughts, filling our lowly desires, softening the soul, and causing every holy thing to increase and spread.

11. "*Thou crownest the year with thy goodness.*" The harvest is the plainest display of the divine bounty, and the crown of the year. The Lord himself conducts the coronation, and sets the golden coronal upon the brow of the year.

Or, we may understand the expression to mean that God's love encircles the year as with a crown; each month has its gems, each day its pearl. Unceasing kindness girdles all time with a belt of love. The providence of God in its visitations makes a complete circuit, and surrounds the year. "*And thy paths drop fatness.*" The footsteps of God, when he visits the land with rain, create fertility. It was said of the Tartar hordes, that grass grew no more where their horses' feet had trodden; so, on the contrary, it may be said that the march of Jehovah, the Fertiliser, may be traced by the abundance which he creates. For spiritual harvests we must look to him, for he alone can give "times of refreshing" and feasts of Pentecost.

12. "*They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness.*" Not alone where man is found do the showers descend, but away in the lone places, where only wild animals have their haunt, there the bountiful Lord makes the refreshing rain to drop. Ten thousand oases smile while the Lord of mercy passes by. The birds of the air, the wild goats, and the fleet stags rejoice as they drink from the pools, new filled from heaven. The most lonely and solitary souls God will visit in love. "*And the little hills rejoice on every side.*" On all hands the eminences are girt with gladness. Soon they languish under the effects of drought, but after a season of rain they laugh again with verdure.

13. "*The pastures are clothed with flocks.*" The clothing of man first clothes the fields. Pastures appear to be quite covered with numerous flocks when the grass is abundant. "*The valleys also are covered over with corn.*" The arable as well as the pasture land is rendered fruitful. God's clouds, like ravens, bring us both bread and flesh. Grazing flocks and waving crops are equally the gifts of the Preserver of men, and for both praise should be rendered. Sheep-shearing and harvest should both be holiness unto the Lord. "*They shout for joy.*" The bounty of God makes the earth vocal with his praise, and in opened ears it lifts up a joyous shout. The cattle low out the divine praises, and the rustling ears of grain sing a soft sweet melody unto the Lord.

> "Ye forests bend, ye harvests wave to him;
> Breathe your still song into the reaper's heart,
> As home he goes beneath the joyous moon.
> Bleat out afresh, ye hills; ye mossy rocks
> Retain the sound; the broad responsive low
> Ye valleys raise; for the GREAT SHEPHERD reigns,
> And his *unsuffering* kingdom yet will come."

"*They also sing.*" The voice of nature is articulate to God; it is not only a shout, but a song. Well ordered are the sounds of animate creation as they combine with the equally well-tuned ripple of the waters, and sighings of the wind. Nature has no discords. Her airs are melodious, her chorus is full of harmony. All, all is for the Lord; the world is a hymn to the Eternal, blessed is he who, hearing, joins in it, and makes one singer in the mighty chorus.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

From Psalm lxv. onwards we find ourselves in the midst of a series of Psalms which, with a varying arrangement of the words, are inscribed both מִזְמוֹר and שִׁיר (lxv.—lxviii.) The two words signify a *Psalm-song*. This series, as is universally the case, is arranged according to the community of prominent watchwords. In Psalm lxv. 2 we read: "*To thee is the vow paid;*" and in lxvi. 13: "*I will pay thee my vows;*" in Psalm lxvi. 20: "*Blessed be Elohim;*" and in lxvii. 8: "*Elohim shall bless us.*" Besides Psalms lxvi. and lxvii. have this feature in common, that לַמְנַצֵּחַ, which occurs fifty-five times in the Psalter, is accompanied by the name of the poet in every instance, with the exception of these two anonymous Psalms. The frequently occurring *Sela* of both Psalms also indicates that they were intended to have a musical accompaniment.—*Franz Delitzsch.*

Title.—A Psalm of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.—The psalm is assigned to them, not as being its authors, but because it is supposed that it was often rehearsed by them at the beginning of the return from captivity, to teach us that those things ought especially to be sung concerning that happy restoration which these prophets were wont to sing about. But this inscription is not in the Hebrew text, nor in some translations, but only in certain versions. Jeremiah was not carried away to Babylon; see Jeremiah xxxix. 11, &c. Moreover, both he and Ezekiel died before the return.—*Poole's Synopsis.*

Whole Psalm.—The author of the Psalm is mentioned, but not the date of its composition; but, from an examination of its contents, it would seem to have been intended as a song for the "day of atonement," and for the "feast of tabernacles," which followed immediately after. Num. xxix. 7, 12. The sins of the year were then "covered over," and a thorough purification of the sanctuary was made by a special service of expiation. The labours of the year were also by that time all concluded, and its fruits secured; and Israel could look on the goodness of God towards them, through its entire extent; and this Psalm was penned to serve as a fitting expression of their feelings. It opens with a reference to the "silence" that reigned in the sanctuary; to the profound, unbroken, solemn stillness that reigned within it; while, in deep abasement, the people without waited in hushed expectation the return of their high priest from the immediate presence of God. Lev. xvi. 17. It goes on to a statement of the blessedness of those who are accepted of God, and admitted to fellowship with One so unspeakably great; and concludes with a description of the various processes by which the Almighty had fitted the earth to yield a year's supplies for his people.—*Dalman Hopstone, in "The Ancient Psalms in appropriate Metres. . . . . with Notes."* 1867.

Whole Psalm.—We have here a psalm of thanksgiving to be sung in the Temple during a public festivity, at which the sacrifices were to be offered which had been vowed during a long and protracted drought (verses 1, 2). To the thanksgiving, however, for a gracious rain, and the hope of an abundant harvest (verses 9—14), is added gratitude for a signal deliverance during a time of distress and commotion affecting all the nations around (verse 7, 8). Thus the psalm becomes a song of praise to Jehovah as the God of history and the God of nature alike.—*From the "Psalms Chronologically Arranged. By Four Friends."* 1867.

Whole Psalm.—This is a charming psalm. Coming after the previous sad ones, it seems like the morning after the darkness of night. There is a dewy freshness about it, and from the ninth verse to the end there is a sweet succession of landscape pictures that reminds one of the loveliness of spring; and truly it is a description, in natural figures, of that happy state of men's minds which will be the result of the "Day-Spring's visiting us from on high." Luke i. 7, 8.—*O. Prescott Hiller.*

Verse 1.—"*Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion.*" The believer sometimes seems to want words to exalt God, and stops, as it were, in the middle; his thoughts are overmatched. Thus praise waits, or is silent for God; it is silent to other things, and it waits to be employed about him. The soul is often put to a nonplus in crying up the grace of God, and wants words to express its greatness; yea, to answer the elevation of the thoughts; the heart indites a song of praise, but it cannot tune it. The psalmist is stopped, as it were through admiration (which is *silentium intellectus*), for when the mind can rise no higher, it falls admiring; hence some say, God is most exalted with fewest words.—*Alexander Carmichael.*

Verse 1.—"*Praise waiteth for thee, O God.*" Mercy is not yet come, we expect it: whilst thou art preparing the mercy, we are preparing the praise.—*Edward Leigh in "Annotations on the Five Poetical Books of the Old Testament."* 1657.

Verse 1.—"*Praise waiteth on thee.*" As a servant, whose duty it is to do what thou commandest; or, *for thee;* is ready to be offered in thy courts for special favours. I think there is an allusion to the daily service in which God was praised.—*Benjamin Boothroyd.*

Verse 1.—"*Praise waiteth for thee, O God.*" *Te decet hymnus*, so the vulgar edition reads this place. To thee, O Lord, belong our hymns, our psalms, our praises, our cheerful acclamations, and conformable to that, we translate it, "*Praise waiteth for thee, O God.*" But if we take it according to the original, it must be *tibi silentium laus est*, Thy praise, O Lord, consists in silence. That man praises God best that says least of him; of his mysterious essence, of his unrevealed will and secret purposes.—*Abraham Wright.*

Verse 1.—"*To thee is silence and praise.*"—*Piscator.*

Verse 1.—The Hebrew may be rendered, "*Praise is silent for thee.*" As if the holy man had said, "Lord, I quietly wait for a time to praise thee; my soul is not in an uproar because thou stayest. I am not murmuring, but rather stringing my harp and tuning my instrument with much patience and confidence, that I may be ready to strike up when the joyful news of my deliverance come."—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 1.—"*To thee belongeth silence-praise.*" Praise without any tumult. (Alexander.) It has been said, "The most intense feeling is the most calm, being condensed by repression." And Hooker says of prayer, "The very silence which our unworthiness putteth us unto doth itself make request for us, and that in the confidence of his grace. Looking inward, we are stricken dumb; looking upward, we speak and prevail." Horsley render it, "Upon thee is the repose of prayer."—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 1.— *Praise is silent for thee.*" The Chaldee interpretation is, that our praise is not sufficiently worthy that we should praise God. The very praises of angels are esteemed as nothing before him. For so its rendering is: "*Before thee, O God, whose Majesty dwells in Zion, the praise of angels is regarded as silence.*" . . . . Jerome's version here is, "*To thee silence is praise, O God, in Zion.*" Atheneus says, silence is a divine thing; and Thomas à Kempis calls silence the nutriment of devotion.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 1.—"*To thee belong submission, praise, O God, in Sion.*" [Version of the American Bible Union.] Thou hast a claim for submission in times of sorrow, for praise in seasons of joy.—*Thomas J. Conant, in "The Psalms. . . with occasional Notes.*" 1871.

Verse 1.—"*Vow.*" A vow is a voluntary and deliberate promise made unto God in an extraordinary case. "It is a religious promise made unto God in a holy manner:" so a modern writer defines it.* It is a "holy and religious promise, advisedly and freely made unto God, concerning something which to do or to omit appeareth to be grateful and well-pleasing unto him:" so Bucanus. I forbear Aquinas's definition of a vow. If these which I have given satisfy not, then view it in the words of Peter Martyr, a man of repute, and well-known to our own nation in the days of Edward VI., of ever-blessed memory: "It is a holy promise, whereby we bind ourselves to offer somewhat unto God." There is one more who defines it, and he is a man whose judgment, learning, and holiness hath perfumed his name; it is learned Perkins, in his "Cases of Conscience." "A vow," saith he, "is a promise made unto God of things lawful and possible."—*Henry Hurst* (—1690), *in "The Morning Exercises."*

Verse 1 (*last clause*).—The reference here is to the vows or promises which the people had made in view of the manifested judgments of God, and the proofs of his goodness. Those vows they were now ready to carry out in expressions of praise.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 2.—"*O thou that hearest prayer,*" etc. This is one of his titles of honour, he is a God that hears prayer; and it is as truly ascribed to him as

* Szegedinus.

mercy or justice. He hears all prayer, therefore, "*unto thee shall all flesh come.*" He never rejects any that deserves the name of prayer, how weak, how unworthy soever the petitioner be. "*All flesh!*" And will he (may faith say) reject mine only? Rom. x. 12, "He is rich unto all that call upon him;" Ps. lxxxvi. 5, "Thou art plenteous in mercy to all that call upon thee;" Heb. xi. 6, "A rewarder of them that diligently seek him." This must be believed as certainly as we believe that God is. As sure as God is the true God, so sure is it that none who sought him diligently departed from him without a reward. He rewards all seekers, for *indefinita in materia necessaria æquipollet universali.* And if all, why not me? You may as well doubt that he is God, as doubt that he will not reward, not hear prayer; so James i. 5, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."—*David Clarkson.*

Verse 2.—"*O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.*" What avails prayer, if it be not heard? But God's people need not lay it aside on that score. Our text bears two things with respect to that matter. 1. A comfortable title ascribed to God, with the unanimous consent of all the sons of Zion, who are all praying persons: "*O thou that hearest prayer.*" He speaks to "*God in Zion,*" or Zion's God, that is in New Testament language, to God in Christ. An absolute God thundereth on sinners from Sinai, there can be no comfortable intercourse betwixt God and them, by the law: but in Zion, from the mercy-seat, in Christ, he is the hearer of prayer; they give in their supplications, and he graciously hears them. Such faith of it they have, that praise waits there for the prayer-hearing God. 2. The effect of the savour of this title of God, spread abroad in the world: "*Unto thee shall all flesh come:*" not only Jews, but Gentiles. The poor Gentiles who have long in vain implored the aid of their idols, hearing and believing that God is the hearer of prayer, will flock to him, and present their petitions. They will throng in about his door, where by the gospel they understand beggars are so well served. They will "*come in even unto thee,*" Heb. They will come in even to thy seat, thy throne of grace, even unto thyself through the Mediator. . . . . That God is the hearer of prayer, and will hear the prayers of his people, is evident from these considerations:—First. The supernatural instinct of praying that is found in all that are born of God, Gal. iv. 6. It is as natural for them to fall a praying when the grace of God has touched their hearts, as for children when they are born into the world to cry, or to desire the breasts. Zechariah xii. 10. compared with Acts ix. 11, where in the account that is given of Paul, at his conversion, it is particularly noticed, "Behold he prayeth." Hence the whole saving change on a soul comes under the character of this instinct. Jeremiah iii. 4, 19. Secondly. The intercession of Christ, Rom. viii. 34. It is a great part of the work of Christ's intercession to present the prayers of his people before his Father, Rev. viii. 4, to take their causes in hand, contained in their supplications. 1 John ii. 1. Thirdly. The promises of the covenant, whereby God's faithfulness is impawned for the hearing of prayer, as Matt. vii. 7: see also Isaiah lxv. 24. Fourthly. The many encouragements given in the Word to the people of God, to come with their cases unto the Lord by prayer. He invites them to his throne of grace with their petitions for supply of their needs. Cant. ii. 14. He sends afflictions to press them to come. Hosea v. 15. He gives them ground of hope of success, Psalm l. 15, whatever extremity their case is brought to. Isaiah xli. 17. He shows them that however long he may delay for their trial, yet praying and not fainting shall be successful at length. Luke xviii. 8. Fifthly. The gracious nature of God, with the endearing relations he stands in to his people. Exodus xxii. 27. He wants not power and ability to fulfil the holy desires of his people; he is gracious, and will withhold no good from them that they really need. He has the bowels of a father to pity them, the bowels of a mother to her sucking child. He has a most tender sympathy with them in all their afflictions, the touches on them are as on the apple of his eye; and he never refuses them a

request, but for their good. Rom. viii. 28. Sixthly. The experiences which the saints of all ages have had of the answer of prayer. The faith of it brings them to God at conversion, as the text intimates; and they that believe cannot be disappointed. Lastly. The present ease and relief that prayer sometimes gives to the saints, while yet the full answer of prayer is not come. Psalm cxxxviii. 3.—*Thomas Boston* (1676—1732).

Verse 2.—"*O thou that hearest prayer.*" Observe 1. That God is called the hearer of prayers, since he hears, without distinction of persons, the prayers of every one poured forth with piety, not only of the Jews, but also of the Gentiles; as in Acts x. 34, 35. . . . . It follows, therefore, as a necessary consequence, *that all flesh should come to him.* 2. *To come to God*, is not indeed simply tantamount to saying, *to draw near to God*, to adore, call upon, and worship him, but to come *to Zion* for the purpose of adoring God; for it was just now said, that God must be praised in Zion, and to this the phrase, *to come to God*, must be referred. On this account also אֵ is not used, but יָ, whose proper force is *right up to God*, or to the place of the habitation of God to render adoration to God.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 2.—"*To thee shall all flesh come.*" To Christ "*all flesh* comes," that is (1), every sinner and carnal man. He himself says, Matt. ix. 13, "*I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.*" The Grecian priest in olden times, when approaching to receive the sacrifice, used to exclaim, *Who comes there?* and the reply was, *Many and good.* But God receives publicans and sinners, and inviteth them to his banquet, and eateth with them; but for the purpose of delivering them from sin. "*All flesh shall see the salvation of God.*" (2.) *All flesh* may be taken for the whole flesh, the whole body; all the senses and members of the body shall come to God that they may pay him tribute as their King.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 2.—"*All flesh.*" By *flesh* is meant man in his weakness and need.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 3.—"*Iniquities prevail against me.*" There are two ways in which iniquities may prevail against the Christian—the first is in the growing sense of his guilt, the second is in the power of their acting. This prevalence cannot be entire, for sin shall not have dominion over them; but it may be occasional and partial. There are two ways, according to Scripture, in which God purges our transgressions; and they always go together. The one is by pardoning mercy. Thus David prays: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." Thus the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. The other is by sanctifying grace: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." And this is as much the work of God as the former. He subdues our iniquities as well as forgives them.—*William Jay.*

Verse .—"*Iniquities.*" Literally, *Words of iniquities*, by some regarded as a pleonastic phrase for iniquities themselves. More probably, however, the phrase means the charge or accusation of iniquity.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 3.—The deeds of iniquity are said *to prevail against us*, in so far as they are too strong and powerful for us to deny or refute, and to subject us to a demand of those penalties which the sin merits; hence there remains no other refuge than the clemency and grace of God, the Judge. See Psalms cxliii. 2: cxxx. 3, 4.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 3.—"*As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.*" In the Hebrew it is, Thou shalt hide them. It alludes to the mercy seat which was covered with the wings of the Cherubim; so are the sins of the godly, when repented of, covered with the wings of mercy and favour.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 3.—"*Thou shalt purge them away;*" or, "*Thou coverest them.*" The pronoun is emphatic, as though to express the conviction that God and God alone could do this.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 3.—The holy prophets, and penmen of Scripture, have no grounds of hope for pardon of sin, save those which are common to the meanest of God's

people; for David, in his confession, cometh in by himself alone, aggravating his own sins most: "*Iniquities prevail against me*," saith he. But in hope of pardon, he joineth with the rest of God's people, saying, "*As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verses 3. 4.—Now, soul, thou art molested with many lusts that infest thee and obstruct thy commerce with heaven; yea, thou hast complained to thy God, what loss thou hast suffered by them; is it now presumption to expect relief from him, that he will rescue thee from them, that thou mayest serve him without fear, who is thy liege Lord? You have the saints for your precedents; who, when they have been in conflict with their corruptions, yea, been foiled by them, have even then exercised their faith on God, and expected the ruin of those enemies, which, for the present, have overrun them. "*Iniquities prevail against me;*" he means his own sins; but see his faith; at the same time that they prevailed over him, he beholds God destroying them, as appears in the very next words, "*As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.*" See here, poor Christian, who thinkest that thou shalt never get above deck, holy David has a faith, not only for himself, but also for all believers, of whose number I suppose thee one. And mark the ground he hath for this his confidence, taken from God's choosing act: "*Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee that he may dwell in thy courts.*" As if he had said, Surely he will not let them be under the power of sin, or in want of his gracious succour, whom he sets so near himself. This is Christ's own argument against Satan, in the behalf of his people. "*The Lord said unto Satan, the Lord rebuke thee.*" Zech. iii. 2.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 4.—"*Blessed is the man whom thou choosest.*" The benedictions of the Psalter advance in spirituality and indicate a growth. The first blessed the godly reader of the word. Ps. i. 1. The second described the pardoned child. Ps. xxxii. 1. The third pronounced a blessing upon faith. Ps. xxxiv. 8 and Ps. xl. 4. The fourth commended the active and generous believer, abundant in deeds of charity (Ps. xli. 1); and this last, mounting to the fountain head of all benediction, blesses the elect of God.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 4.—"*The man whom thou choosest.*" Christ, whom God chose, and of whom he said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," is, indeed, "over all, God blessed for ever;" but in him his elect are blessed too For his sake, not for our own, are we chosen; in him, not in ourselves, are we received by God, being accepted in the Beloved; and, therefore, in him are we blessed: he is our blessing. With that High Priest who has ascended into the holy place and entered within the vail, we enter into the house of God; we learn to dwell therein; we are filled with its spiritual joys; we partake of its holy mysteries and sacraments of grace and love.—*From "A Plain Commentary on the Book of Psalms."* 1859.

Verse 4.—"*We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.*" We shall be so filled, that nothing can be said to be wanting, we shall have nothing to look for outside. What can be wanting in the house of him who made everything, who is the master of everything, who will be all unto all, in whom is an inexhaustible treasure of good. Of him is said in Psalm ciii. "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things;" and in Psalm xvii. "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."—*Robert Bellarmine* (1542—1621).

Verse 4.—"*Satisfied with the goodness of thy house.*" There is an allusion here to the oblations which were devoted to God, of which, also, sacred persons partook.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 5.—"*By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us.*" The reason why he answers thus is, because what God doth for his people, take one thing with another, is still in order to the crucifying of the flesh; and what more *terrible* than such a death? We pray for *pleasing* things, as we imagine, but as

we are flesh as well as spirit; so the flesh hath still a part in every prayer, and what we beg is partly carnal, and upon the matter, in part, we beg we know not what. Now, the answer as it comes from God, take all together, is spiritual, which is a crucifying thing to sinful flesh; hence comes in all the terror. . . . . You pray for pardon; that is a pleasing thing, yet rightly understood not pleasing to the flesh; it mortifies corruption, breaks the heart, engages to a holy life: every answer from our God to us, one way or the other, first or last, shall tend that way. God useth so to give good things unto his children, as withal to give himself, and show to them his heavenly glory in what is done. . . . . Now God is *terrible* to sinful flesh: so far as he appears, it dies. Jacob, therefore, whilst he conquered God in prayer, himself was overcome, signified by that touch upon his thigh put out of joint, where the chiefest stress in wrestling lies. When we are weak, then are we strong; because, as God appears, we die unto ourselves and live in him.—*William Carter, in a Fast Sermon entitled,* "*Light in Darkness.*" 1648.

Verse 5.—God's judgments are these *terribilia*, terrible, fearful things; and he is faithful in his covenant; and by terrible judgments he will answer, that is, satisfy our expectation: and that is a convenient sense of these words. But the word which we translate "*righteousness*" here, is *tzadok*, and *tzadok* is not faithfulness, but holiness; and these "*terrible things*" are reverend things; and so Tremellius translates it, and well. *Per res reverendas, by reverend things*, things to which there belongs a reverence—"*thou shalt answer us.*" And thus, the sense of this place will be, that the God of our salvation (that is, God working in the Christian church) calls us to holiness, to righteousness, by terrible things; not terrible in the way and nature of revenge, but terrible, that is, stupendous, reverend, mysterious; so that we should not make religion too homely a thing, but come always to all acts and exercises of religion with reverence, with fear, and trembling, and make a difference between religious and civil actions.—*John Donne.*

Verse 5.—God's deliverance of his church and people "*by terrible things*" is "*in righteousness.*" The meaning of the point is this: God in all the deliverances of his people by terrible things, doth therein manifest his righteousness. He doth therein nothing but what is according to righteousness and justice. To clear this, consider that there is a double righteousness, the righteousness of his word, which is the righteousness of his faithfulness; and the righteousness of his works, or his just acts of righteousness. And God doth manifest both these in his deliverance of his people by terrible things.—*John Bewick.* 1644.

Verse 5.—But what is the meaning when they say, "*wilt thou answer us?*" *Us*, who are inhabitants of Zion, who are constituted thy people, and truly worship Thee; *us*, moreover, in contact with enemies, who stirred up strife against us, and wished us ill; *us*, lastly, who aim at and seek the stability of the Kingdom and Church, and every kind of felicity and safety; with such things *wilt thou answer us*, it says, that is, for our advantage and benefit, and according to our vows, and therefore by pleading our cause, and deciding in our favour, and satisfying our desires; and in this way rendering us happy and establishing us, and subduing and confounding our foes.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 5.—"*Who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth.*" How could God be the confidence of all the ends of the earth, if he does not reign and constantly work? The stability of the mountains is ascribed not to certain physical laws, but to the power of God. The noise of the seas is stilled not by laws without a powerful agent, but by the immediate influence of the Almighty Ruler. Human laws also may be the means of restraining persecution, but they are only means; and it is God who stilleth the tumult of the people. It is God who maketh the outgoings of the morning and evening to sing. The Scriptures, in viewing the works which God does through means, never lose sight of God himself. God visits and waters the earth: God prepares the corn. Without his own immediate power, the laws of nature could not produce their

effect. How consoling and satisfactory is this view of Divine Providence, compared with that of an infidel philosophy, that forbids us to go further back than to the power of certain physical laws, which it grants, indeed, were at first established by God, but which can now perform their office without him.—*Alexander Carson.* (1776—1844).

Verse 5.—"*All the ends of the earth.*" God is *in himself potentially*, "*The confidence of all the ends of the earth.*" Hereafter he will be recognised by all to be so (Ps. xxiii. 27, 28), of which the Queen of Sheba's coming to Solomon, "from the uttermost parts of the earth" is a type. Matt. xii. 42.—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 5.—"*And of them that are afar off upon the sea.*" We must beseech God in the words of this Psalm, that since He stands upon the shore, and beholds our perils, he would make us, who are tossed on the turbulent sea, secure for his name's sake, and enable us to hold between Scylla and Charybdis, the middle course, and escaping the danger on either hand, with a sound vessel and safe merchandise, reach the port.—*Lorinus* (*from Augustine*).

Verses 5—8.—The divine watering of the earth is obviously symbolical of the descent of the Holy Spirit after Christ's ascension; and when on the great day of Pentecost the devout Jews, "out of every nation under heaven," heard the apostle speaking in their several tongues the wonderful works of God, it was a testimony that God was beginning spiritually to make "*the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.*" To God "which stilleth the noise of the waves and the tumult of the people," the apostles had taken themselves in prayer after their first conflict with Jewish authorities, the first conflict of the infant Christian community with the powers of this world: the language of the Psalm (ver. 5), "*O God of our salvation; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea,*" is reflected in the opening words of their prayer on that occasion (Acts iv. 24). "Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is;" and if, when they prayed, "the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost," it was no idle sign that "by terrible things in righteousness" were they being answered by the God of their salvation. These are, of course, mere illustrations of the inner harmony of Scripture; but, as such, they may not be without their value.—*Joseph Francis Thrupp.*

Verse 6.—"*Setteth fast the mountains.*" It is by thy strength they have been raised, and by thy power they are girded about and preserved. He represents the mountains as being formed and pitched into their proper places by the mighty hand of God; and shows that they are preserved from splitting, falling down, or mouldering away, as it were, by a girdle by which they are surrounded. The image is very fine. They were hooped about by the divine power.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 8.—"*Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.*" That is, thou makest men to rejoice, they are glad, they rejoice in, or at, the outgoings in the morning. And at the evening men rejoice too, for then they go to their rest, being wearied with the labour of the day. Or, we may thus expound it: Thou makest men who live at the outgoings of the morning, and at the outgoings of the evening, to rejoice. As if it had been said, Thou makest the eastern people and the western people, all people from east to west, rejoice. And that which makes all people to rejoice, naturally, is the rising of light with them in the east, and the coming or light toward them in the west.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 8.—"*Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.*" How contrary soever light and darkness are to one another, and how inevitable soever the partition between them (Gen. i. 4.), both are equally welcome to us, the world in their season; it is hard to say which is more welcome to us, the light of the morning which beginneth the business of the day, or the shadows of the evening which reflecteth the repose of the night. Doth the watchman wait

for the morning? so doth the hireling earnestly desire the shadow. Some understand it of the morning and evening sacrifice, which good people greatly rejoiced in, and in which God was constantly honoured. Thou makest them to sing, so the word is; for every morning and every evening songs of praise were sung by the Levites; it was that which the duty of every day required. And we are to look upon our daily worship alone, and with our families, to be both the most needful of our daily business, and the most delightful of our daily comforts; and if therein we keep up our communion with God, the outgoings both of the morning and of the evening are thereby made truly to rejoice.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 8.—Lyranus, Dionysius Carthusianus, Cajetanus, Placidus Parmensis, (who treads in the footsteps of Cajetanus though he does not mention him) take the first clause to refer to the wonder of all mankind at the wonderful works of God on the land and the sea; and explain the second respecting the sacrifices which were wont to be offered in the morning and evening: that God made these acceptable to himself and delightful to those who offered them, especially after the return from captivity. In the beginning of the Psalm sacrifices are hinted at by *praise* and *vows*, as we have seen, and in the history of Esdra it is recorded, that *the morning and evening sacrifice were offered unto the Lord* by those who had returned; and that those who approached, when they entered, and others who had made their offerings, when they departed, gave praises to God. Hence it is here said, that the outgoings of the morning and of the evening, that is to say, when they who praise God go forth from either sacrifice, God will be well pleased, he will receive delight from that praise, and it will be grateful to him.—*Lorinus.*

Verse 8.—Figuratively, "*the outgoing of the morning*," or dawn, is the light of grace in the beginning of conversion; "*the outgoing of the evening*" is the final light of grace in the hour of death.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 9.—"*Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it*," etc. How beautiful are the words of the inspired poet, read in this month of harvest, nearly three thousand years after they were written! For nearly three thousand years since the royal poet looked over the plains of Judea covered with the bounty of God, and broke forth into his magnificent hymn of praise, has the earth rolled on in her course, and the hand of God has blessed her, and all her children, with seed-time and harvest, with joy and abundance. The very steadfastness of the Almighty's liberality, flowing like a mighty ocean through the infinite vast of the universe, makes his creatures forget to wonder at its wonderfulness, to feel true thankfulness at its immeasurable goodness. The sun rises and sets so surely; the seasons run on amid all their changes with such inimitable truth, that we take as a matter of course that which is amazing beyond all stretch of imagination, and good beyond the widest expansion of the noblest human heart.

The poor man, with his half-dozen children, toils, and often dies, under the vain labour of winning bread for them. God feeds his family of countless myriads swarming over the surface of all countless worlds, and none know need but through the follies of themselves, or the cruelty of their fellows. God pours his light from innumerable suns on innumerable rejoicing planets; he waters them everywhere in the fittest moment; he ripens the food of globes and of nations, and gives them fair weather to garner it. And from age to age, amid his endless creatures of endless forms and powers, in the beauty and the sunshine, and the magnificence of nature, he seems to sing throughout creation the glorious song of his own divine joy, in the immortality of his youth, in the omnipotence of his nature, in the eternity of his patience, and the abounding boundlessness of his love. What a family hangs on his sustaining arm! The life and soul of infinite ages, and of uncounted worlds! Let a moment's failure of his power, of his watchfulness, or of his will to do good, occur, and what a sweep of death and annihilation through the universe! How stars would reel, planets expire, and nations perish! But from age to age, no such catastrophe occurs,

even in the midst of natural crimes, and [illegible] the hand that made and feeds it. Life springs [illegible]; food springs up as plentifully to sustain it, and sunshine and joy are poured over all from the invisible throne of God, as the poetry of the existence which he has given. If there come seasons of dearth, or of failure, they come but as warnings to proud and tyrannic man. The potato is smitten that a nation may not be oppressed for ever; and the harvest is diminished that the laws of man's unnatural avarice may be rent asunder. And then, again, the sun shines, the rain falls, and the earth rejoices in a renewed beauty, and in a redoubled plenty.—*William Howitt, in "The Year-Book of the Country."* 1850.

Verse 9.—"*Thou visitest the earth.*" God seems to come with the coming-in of each of the seasons. In some respects, during winter, God seems like a man travelling into a far country. Darkness, and barrenness, and coldness, suggest absence on the part of God. The spring looks like his return. The great change it involves cheerily whispers, "He is not far from any one of us." In longer days, and a warmer atmosphere, and a revived earth, God comes to us. These things are not of necessity, but of providence. There are second causes, but above all these is the First Cause, intelligent, loving, and free, God rules in all, over all, and above all. He is not displaced or supplanted by the forces and agencies which he employs, he is not absorbed by care of other worlds, he is not indifferent toward the earth. A personal superintendence and providence are not beneath his dignity, or in anywise distasteful to him. As Maker, and Life-giver, and Father, "*Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it.*"—*Samuel Martin, in "Rain upon the Mown Grass, and other Sermons."* 1871.

Verse 9.—The psalmist is here foretelling the gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the conversion of the nations of the earth to Christ.—*Origen.*

Verse 9.—The chiefs of Hebrew theology attribute four keys to God, which he never entrusted to any angel or seraph, and as the first of these they place *the key of rain.* He himself is said, in Job xxxviii. 26, to give a law to the rain, and in chap. xxvi. 8, *to bind up the waters in the clouds.*—*Thomas LeBlanc.*

Verse 9.—"*With the river of God, which is full of water.*" That is, the clouds figuratively described.—*Edward Leigh* (1602-3—1671).

Verse 9.—"*The river of God,*" as opposed to earthly streams. However these may fail, the divine resources are exhaustless.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 9.—"*The river of God.*" The Chaldee paraphrase is, *From the fountain of God which is in the heavens, which is full of the rain-storms of blessing, thou wilt prepare their cornfields.*—*Lorinus.*

Verse 9.—"*Thou preparest their grain; for so dost thou prepare the earth.*" [Version of Am. Bib. Un.] "*So,*" namely, with this design, and for this end. In the Hebrew, "for so dost thou prepare her;" referring to "the earth," which in Hebrew is *fem.*, while grain is *masc.* The meaning can be expressed in English only by using the word (earth) which the Hebrew pronoun represents. The English pronoun (it) would necessarily refer to "grain," and would represent neither the meaning of the Hebrew nor its form.—*Thomas J. Conant.*

Verse 9.—"*Thou preparest them corn,*" etc. Corn is the special gift of God to man. There are several interesting and instructive ideas connected with this view of it. All the other plants we use as food are unfit for this purpose in their natural condition, and require to have their nutritious qualities developed, and their natures and forms to a certain extent changed by a gradual process of cultivation. There is not a single useful plant grown in our gardens and fields, but is utterly worthless for food in its normal or wild state; and man has been left to himself to find out, slowly and painfully, how to convert these crudities of nature into nutritious vegetables. But it is not so with corn. It has from the very beginning been an abnormal production. God gave it to Adam, we have every reason to believe, in the same perfect state of preparation for food in which we find it at the present day. It was made expressly for man, and given directly into his hands. "Behold," says the Creator, "I have given you every herb bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth;" that is, all the

cereal plants—such as corn, wheat, barley, rice, maize, etc., whose peculiar characteristic it is to produce seed. . . . .

There is another proof that corn was created expressly for man's use, in the fact that it has never been found in a wild state. The primitive types from which all our other esculent plants were derived are still to be found in a state of nature in this or other countries. The wild beet and cabbage still grow on our sea-shores; the crab-apple and the sloe, the savage parents of our luscious pippins and plums, are still found among the trees of the wood; but where are the original types of our corn plants? Where are the wild grasses which, according to some authors, the cumulative processes of agriculture, carried on through successive ages, have developed into corn, wheat, and barley? Much has been written, and many experiments have been tried, to determine the natural origin of these cereals, but every effort has hitherto proved in vain. Reports have again and again been circulated that corn and wheat have been found growing wild in some parts of Persia and the steppes of Tartary, apparently far from the influence of cultivation; but when tested by botanical data, these reports have turned out, in every instance, to be unfounded. Corn has never been known as anything else than a cultivated plant.

History and observation prove that it cannot grow spontaneously. It is never, like other plants, self-sown and self-diffused. Neglected of men, it speedily disappears and becomes extinct. It does not return, as do all other cultivated varieties of plants, to a natural condition, and so become worthless as food, but utterly perishes, being constitutionally unfitted to maintain the struggle for existence with the aboriginal vegetation of the soil. All this proves that it must have been produced miraculously; or, in other words, given by God to man directly, in the same abnormal condition in which it now appears; for nature never could have developed or preserved it. In the mythologies of all the ancient nations it was confidently affirmed to have had a supernatural origin. The Greeks and Romans believed it to be the gift of the goddess Ceres, who taught her son, Triptolemus, to cultivate and distribute it over the earth; and from her, the whole class of plants received the name of cereals, which they now bear. And we only express the same truth when we say to him, whom these pagans ignorantly worshipped, "*Thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it.*"

Let me bring forth one more proof of special design, enabling us to recognise the hand of God in this mercy. Corn is universally diffused. It is almost the only species of plant which is capable of growing everywhere, in almost every soil, in almost any situation. In some form or other, adapted to the various modifications of climate and physical conditions, which occur in different countries, it is spread over an area of the earth's surface as extensive as the occupancy of the human race. . . . .

Rice is grown in tropical countries where periodical rains and inundations, followed by excessive heat, occur, and furnishes the chief article of diet for the largest proportion of the human race. Wheat will not thrive in hot climates, but flourishes all over the temperate zone, at various ranges of elevation, and is admirably adapted to the wants of highly civilised communities. Maize spreads over an immense geographical area in the new world, where it has been known from time immemorial, and formed a principal element of that Indian civilisation which surprised the Spaniards in Mexico and Peru. Barley is cultivated in those parts of Europe and Asia where the soil and climate are not adapted for wheat; while oats and rye extend far into the bleak north, and disappear only from those desolate Arctic regions where man cannot exist in his social capacity. By these striking adaptations of different varieties of grain, containing the same essential ingredients, to different soils and climates, Providence has furnished the indispensable food for the sustenance of the human race throughout the whole habitable globe; and all nations, and tribes, and tongues can rejoice together, as one great family, with the joy of harvest.—*Hugh Macmillan, in "Bible Teachings in Nature."* 1868.

Verses 9–13.—I do not know any picture of rural life that in any measure comes up to the exquisite description here brought before us, and which every one's heart at once recognises as so true to nature in all its branches. In the brief compass of five verses we have the whole scene vividly sketched, from the first preparation of the earth or soil; the provision of the corn-seed for the sower; the rain in its season, the former and the latter rain, watering the ridges, settling the furrows, and causing the seed to swell and to spring forth, and bud and blossom: then the crowning of the whole year in the appointed weeks of harvest, and men's hearts rejoicing before God according to the joy in harvest, the very foot-paths dropping with fatness, and the valleys shouting and singing for joy. Our harvest-homes are times of rejoicing too, but I would that our tillers and reapers of the soil would as piously refer all to God as the psalmist did. "*Thou* waterest the earth, *Thou* greatly enrichest it, *Thou* preparest the corn, *Thou* waterest the ridges, *Thou* settlest the furrows, *Thou* makest it soft with showers, *Thou* blessest the springing thereof, *Thou* crownest the year with thy goodness." Not one word of man, of man's skill, or of man's labour, not one thought of self. How different from him whose grounds brought forth abundantly, and whose only thought was, "I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."—*Barton Bouchier.*

Verse 10.—The rain hath a *mollifying nature.* When the earth is like iron under our feet by long droughts or hard frosts, a few good showers supple it, and make it tender. David, speaking of the earth, saith, "*Thou makest it soft with showers.*" Jesus Christ hath a softening virtue. Sometimes the heart is hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. . . . . If Christ would but now drop a few drops from heaven, the veriest flint in the congregation would be turned into a fountain of water. . . . . The rain hath a *fructifying virtue.* All the labour of the husbandman comes to nothing if either the former or the latter rain be denied. The psalmist sets out this virtue of the rain in verses 9—13. Want of rain brings a famine upon the earth. . . . . If Christ do not rain, there will be no fruits; but if Christ will drop down his dew, the pastures will be green. All the labour and pains of the spiritual husbandman will come to nothing if the rain come not down from Christ; and, if he please to pour down showers, let not the eunuch say, "I am a dry tree." Though your heart be as dry and withered as the rod of Aaron was, yet if Christ will rain upon it, it shall both bud, and blossom, and bring forth almonds. . . . . The rain hath a *recreating virtue.* It causeth a gladness and cheerfulness in the hearts of men, and it begets a kind of briskness in the sensitive creatures: the birds chirp, the beasts of the field rejoice in their kind; yea, there is a kind of joy in the very inanimate creatures. The psalmist speaks of this: "The pastures are clothed with flocks, the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing." When rain comes after a long drought, there is melody made by all creatures in this lower world. Jesus Christ hath a cheering virtue; he doth fill the soul with joy when he comes down into the soul; the heart that was dead, and dull, and heavy is made pleasant and joyful when these showers fall upon it. When Jesus Christ comes to the soul, he brings joy to the soul: "They joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil." Isa. ix. 3.—*Ralph Robinson.*

Verse 10.—Thou art the right Master-cultivator, who cultivates the land much more and much better than the farmer does. He does nothing more to it than break up the ground, and plough, and sow, and then lets it lie. But God must be always attending to it with rain and heat, and must do everything to make it grow and prosper, while the farmer lies at home and sleeps.—*Martin Luther.*

Verse 11.—"*Thou crownest the year with thy goodness.*" Dr. William Whewell, in his Bridgewater Treatise, notes the evidence of design in the

length of the year, and, although it may not perhaps be considered to be a direct comment on the text, I beg to quote it here, as it may awaken a train of thought, and make more conspicuous the goodness of God, in the revolution of the seasons. "If any change in the length of the year were to take place, the working of the botanical world would be thrown into utter disorder, the functions of plants would be entirely deranged, and the whole vegetable kingdom involved in instant decay and rapid extinction. That this would be the case, may be collected from innumerable indications. Most of our fruit trees, for example, require the year to be of its present length. If the summer and the autumn were much shorter, the fruit could not ripen; if these seasons were much longer, the tree would put forth a fresh suit of blossoms, to be cut down by the winter. Or, if the year were twice its present length, a second crop of fruit would probably not be matured, for want, among other things, of an intermediate season of rest and consolidation, such as the winter is. Our forest trees, in like manner, appear to need all the seasons of our present year for their perfection; the spring, summer, and autumn, for the development of their leaves and consequent formation of their *proper juice*, and of wood from this; and the winter for the hardening and solidifying the substance thus formed. . . . . The processes of the rising of the sap, of the formation of proper juices, of the unfolding of leaves, the opening of flowers, the fecundation of the fruit, the ripening of the seed, its proper deposition in order for the reproduction of a new plant; all these operations require a certain portion of time, and could not be compressed into a space less than a year, or at least could not be abbreviated in any very great degree. And, on the other hand, if the winter were greatly longer than it now is, many seeds would not germinate at the return of spring. Seeds which have been kept too long, require stimulants to make them fertile. If, therefore, the duration of the seasons were much to change, the processes of vegetable life would be interrupted, deranged, distempered. What, for instance, would become of our calendar of Flora, if the year were lengthened or shortened by six months? Some of the dates would never arrive in the one case, and the vegetable processes which mark them would be superseded; some seasons would be without dates in the other case, and these periods would be employed in a way hurtful to the plants, and no doubt speedily destructive. We should have, not only a *year of confusion*, but, if it were repeated and continued, a year of death. . . . . The same kind of argument might be applied to the animal creation. The pairing, nesting, hatching, fledging, and flight of birds, for instance, occupy each its peculiar time of the year; and, together with a proper period of rest, fill up the twelve months; the transformations of most insects have a similar reference to the seasons, their progress and duration. 'In every species' (except man's), says a writer* on animals, 'there is a particular period of the year in which the reproductive system exercises its energies. And the season of love and the period of gestation are so arranged that the young ones are produced at the time wherein the conditions of temperature are most suited to the commencement of life.' It is not our business here to consider the details of such provisions, beautiful and striking as they are. But the prevalence of the great law of periodicity in the vital functions of organised beings will be allowed to have a claim to be considered in its reference to astronomy, when it is seen that their periodical constitution derives its use from the periodical nature of the motions of the planets round the sun; and that the duration of such cycles in the existence of plants and animals has a reference to the arbitrary elements of the solar system, a reference which, we maintain, is inexplicable and unintelligible, except by admitting into our conceptions an intelligent Author, alike of the organic and inorganic universe."

Verse 11.—"*Thou crownest the year with thy goodness.*" God has surrounded this year with his goodness, "compassed and enclosed it" on every side. So we translate the same word, (Ps. v. 12.) "With favour wilt thou

* Flemming.

compass (or crown) him as with a shield." He has given us instances of his goodness in every thing that concerns us; so that turn which way we will, we meet with the tokens of his favour; every part of the year has been enriched with the blessings of heaven, and no gap has been left open for any desolating judgment to enter by.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 11.—"*Thou crownest the year.*" A full and *plentiful harvest* is the *crown* of the year; and this springs from the unmerited *goodness* of God. This is the *diadem* of the earth. עִטַּרְתָּ *ittarta*, "*Thou encirclest*," as with a diadem. A most elegant expression, to show the progress of the sun through the *twelve* signs of the zodiac, producing the seasons, and giving a sufficiency of light and heat alternately, to all places on the surface of the globe, by its north and south declination (amounting to 23° 28′ at the solstices) on each side of the equator. A more beautiful image could not have been chosen; and the very appearance of the *space*, termed the *zodiac* on a celestial globe, shows with what propriety the idea of a *circle* or *diadem* was conceived by this inimitable poet.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 11.—"*Thou crownest.*" The herbs, fruits, and flowers, produced by the earth, are here finely represented as a beautiful variegated crown, set upon her head, by the hands of the great Creator.—*Samuel Burder.*

Verse 11.—*To crown* the year of goodness, is to raise it to the highest degree and summit of prosperity, happiness, and glory. *To crown*, to fill up, to make glorious and joyful: *the year of the goodness* of God is the time in which he unfolds his own highest goodness; *one is crowned*, when the effects of this goodness are displayed on the grandest scale, and bring great glory and joy. Such was the time when he shone forth, and the clouds dropped fatness, and all parts of the earth were filled with fertility. . . . . The paths of God are the clouds, before called the *river* of God (see Ps. civ. 3), now the *paths* in which God himself seems to move, and whence, from the place of rain, from the river of God, flows fatness itself, or the copious abundance of all that is sweetest and best.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 11.—"*Thy paths drop fatness.*" When the conqueror journeys through the nations, his paths drop blood; fire and vapour of smoke are in his track, and tears, and groans, and sighs attend him. But where the Lord journeys, his "*paths drop fatness.*" When the kings of old made a progress through their dominions, they caused a famine wherever they tarried; for the greedy courtiers who swarmed in their camp devoured all things like locusts, and were as greedily ravenous as palmer-worms and caterpillars. But where the great King of kings journeys, he enriches the land; his "*paths drop fatness.*" By a bold Hebrew metaphor the clouds are represented as the chariots of God: "He maketh the clouds his chariot;" and as the Lord Jehovah rides upon the heavens in the greatness of his strength, and in his excellency on the sky, the rains drop down upon the lands, and so the wheel-tracks of Jehovah are marked by the fatness which makes glad the earth. Happy, happy are the people who worship such a God, whose coming is ever a coming of goodness and of grace to his creatures.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 11.—"*Paths*" here are properly such tracks as are made by chariot wheels.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 12.—"*The wilderness.*" By *desert*, or *wilderness*, the reader is not always to understand a country altogether barren and unfruitful, but such only as is rarely or never sown or cultivated; which, though it yields no crops of corn or fruit, yet affords herbage more or less for the grazing of cattle, with fountains or rills of water, though more sparingly interspersed than in other places—*Thomas Shaw* (1692—1751).

Verse 13.—The phrase, "*the pastures are clothed with flocks*," cannot be regarded as the vulgar language of poetry. It appears peculiarly beautiful and appropriate, when we consider the numerous flocks which whitened the

plains of Syria and Canaan. In the eastern countries, sheep are much more prolific than with us, and they derive their name from their great fruitfulness; bringing forth, as they are said to do, "thousands and ten thousands in their streets," Ps. cxliv. 13. They, therefore, formed no mean part of the wealth of the East.—*James Anderson, in editorial Note to Calvin in loc.*

Verse 13.—The hills, where not tilled, were bushy and green, and sprinkled with numerous flocks; the valleys broad and covered with a rich crop of wheat; the fields full of reapers and gleaners in the midst of the harvest, with asses and camels receiving their loads of sheaves and feeding unmuzzled and undisturbed upon the ripe grain.—*Edward Robinson.*

Verse 13.—It may seem strange, that he should first tell us, that "*they shout for joy*," and then add the feebler expression, that "*they sing*;" interposing, too, the intensative particle, גַּם, *aph*, *they shout for joy*, YEA, *they also sing*. The verb, however, admits of being taken in the future tense, *they shall sing*; and this denotes a continuation of joy, that they would rejoice, not only one year, but through the endless succession of the seasons. I may add, what is well-known, that in Hebrew the order of expression is frequently inverted in this way.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 13.—"*They also sing.*" *They ardently sing:* such is the real meaning of גַּם; primarily "heat" or "warmth," thence "ardour, passion, anger," and thence again "the nostrils," as the supposed seat of this feeling.—*John Mason Good.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

***Verse* 1.—The fitness, place, use, and power of silence in worship.**

Verse 1.—The limitations, advantages, and obligations of vows.

Verse 2 (*first clause*).—The hearing and granting of prayer is the Lord's property, his usual practice, his pleasure, his nature, and his glory.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 3.—I. *The humble confession.* Sins prevail against us. 1. *When* we are unwatchful, or go into temptation, and even after most sacred engagements. 2. *How.* Through our inbred corruption, natural constitution, suddenness of temptation, neglect of means of grace, and want of fellowship. 3. In *whom.* In the best of men: David says, "against me." Let us take home the caution. II. *The reassuring confidence.* Sin is forgiven. 1. By God: "Thou." 2. By atonement: covering all. 3. Effectually: "purge away." 4. Comprehensively. "our transgressions."

Verse 3.—I. *A cry of distress.* Mansoul besieged: "Iniquities prevail against me." II. *A shout of delight.* Mansoul relieved: "Thou shalt purge them away."—*E. G. Gange.*

Verse 4.—Nearness to God is the foundation of a creature's happiness. This doctrine appears in full evidence, while we consider the three chief ingredients of true felicity, *viz.*, the contemplation of the noblest object, to satisfy all the powers of the understanding; the love of the supreme good, to answer the utmost propensities of the will, and the sweet and everlasting sensation and assurance of the love of an Almighty Friend, who will free us from all the evils which our nature can fear, and confer upon us all the good which a wise and innocent creature can desire. Thus all the capacities of man are employed in their highest and sweetest exercises and enjoyments.—*Isaac Watts.*

Verse 4.—Election, effectual calling, access, adoption, final perseverance, satisfaction. This verse is a body of divinity in miniature.

Verse 5.—Treat the first clause experimentally, and show how prayers for our own sanctification are answered by trial; for God's glory, by our persecution; for our babes' salvation, by their death; for the good of others, by their sickness, etc., etc.

Verse 7.—The Lord, the giver, creator, and preserver of peace.

Verse 8.—Tokens of God's presence; those causing terror, and those inspiring joy.

Verse 8 (last clause).—The peculiar joys of morning and evening.

Verse 9.—"*The river of God.*" John Bunyan's treatise on "The Water of Life" would be suggestive on this topic.

Verse 9.—Divine visits and their consequences.

Verses 9—13.—A Harvest Sermon. I. *The general goodness of God.* Visiting the earth in rotation of seasons: "Seed time and harvest," etc. II. *The greatness of his resources:* "The river of God, which is full of water;" not like Elijah's brook, which dried up. III. *The variety of his benefactions:* "Corn;" "Water;" "Blessest the springing thereof," etc. IV. *The perpetuity of his blessings:* "Crownest the year."—*E. G. G.*

Verse 10.—Divine grace like rain. I. In itself. II. In its abundance. III. In its effects on the heart and entire nature; falling on ridge and furrow; softening, etc. IV. In its fruitful results. See the extract from Ralph Robinson *in loc.*

Verse 10 (last clause).—See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 675: "Spring in the Heart."

Verse 11.—See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 532: "Thanksgiving and Prayer."

Verse 12 (first clause.)—I. *Our dwelling place:* "the wilderness." II. *Our spiritual provision:* "pastures." III. *Our heavenly refreshment:* "they drop."

Verse 12.—Causes for joy for small churches. God remembers them, establishes and increases them, feeds them and revives them, etc.

Verse 13.—The song of nature and the ear which hears it.

PSALM LXVI.

Title.—To the Chief Musician.—*He had need be a man of great skill, worthily to sing such a Psalm as this: the best music in the world would be honoured by marriage with such expressions.* A Song or Psalm, *or a Song and Psalm. It may be either said or sung; it is a marvellous poem if it be but read; but set to suitable music, it must have been one of the noblest strains ever heard by the Jewish people. We do not know who is its author, but we see no reason to doubt that David wrote it. It is in the Davidic style, and has nothing in it unsuited to his times. It is true the "house" of God is mentioned, but the tabernacle was entitled to that designation as well as the temple.*

Subject and Division.—*Praise is the topic, and the subjects for song are the Lord's great works, his gracious benefits, his faithful deliverances, and all his dealings with his people, brought to a close by a personal testimony to special kindness received by the prophet-bard himself. Verses* 1, 2, 3, 4 *are a kind of introductory hymn, calling upon all nations to praise God, and dictating to them the words of a suitable song. Verses* 5, 6, 7 *invite the beholder to* "Come and see" *the works of the Lord, pointing attention to the Red Sea, and perhaps the passage of Jordan. This suggests the similar position of the afflicted people which is described, and its joyful issue predicted, from verse* 8 *to verse* 12. *The singer then becomes personal, and confesses his own obligations to the Lord (verses* 13, 14, 15*); and, bursting forth with a vehement* "Come and hear," *declares with thanksgiving the special favour of the Lord to himself, verses* 16—20.

EXPOSITION.

MAKE a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:
2 Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.
3 Say unto God, How terrible *art thou in* thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.
4 All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing *to* thy name. Selah.

1. "*Make a joyful noise unto God.*" "In Zion," where the more instructed saints were accustomed to profound meditation, the song was silent unto God, and was accepted of him: but in the great popular assemblies a joyful noise was more appropriate and natural, and it would be equally acceptable. If praise is to be wide-spread, it must be vocal; exulting sounds stir the soul and cause a sacred contagion of thanksgiving. Composers of tunes for the congregation should see to it that their airs are cheerful; we need not so much noise, as *joyful* noise. God is to be praised with the voice, and the heart should go therewith in holy exultation. All praise from all nations should be rendered unto the Lord. Happy the day when no shouts shall be presented to Juggernaut or Boodh, but all the earth shall adore the Creator thereof. "*All ye lands.*" Ye heathen nations, ye who have not known Jehovah hitherto, with one consent let the whole earth rejoice before God. The languages of the lands are many, but their praises should be one, addressed to one only God.

2. "*Sing forth the honour of his name.*" The noise is to be modulated with tune and time, and fashioned into singing, for we adore the God of order and harmony. The honour of God should be our subject, and to honour him our object when we sing. To give glory to God is but to restore to him his own

It is our glory [illegible] to give God glory; and all our true glory should be ascribed unto God, for it is his glory. "All worship be to God only," should be the motto of all true believers. The name, nature, and person of God are worthy of the highest honour. "*Make his praise glorious.*" Let not his praise be mean and grovelling: let it arise with grandeur and solemnity before him. The pomp of the ancient festivals is not to be imitated by us, under this dispensation of the Spirit, but we are to throw so much of heart and holy reverence into all our worship that it shall be the best we can render. Heart worship and spiritual joy render praise more glorious than vestments, incense, and music could do.

3. "*Say unto God.*" Turn all your praises to him. Devotion, unless it be resolutely directed to the Lord, is no better than whistling to the wind. "*How terrible art thou in thy works.*" The mind is usually first arrested by those attributes which cause fear and trembling; and, even when the heart has come to love God, and rest in him, there is an increase of worship when the soul is awed by an extraordinary display of the more dreadful of the divine characteristics. Looking upon the convulsions which have shaken continents, the hurricanes which have devastated nations, the plagues which have desolated cities, and other great and amazing displays of divine working, men may well say: "How terrible art thou in thy works." Till we see God in Christ, the terrible predominates in all our apprehensions of him. "*Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee;*" but, as the Hebrew clearly intimates, it will be a forced and false submission. Power brings a man to his knee, but love alone wins his heart. Pharaoh said he would let Israel go, but he lied unto God; he submitted in word but not in deed. Tens of thousands, both in earth and hell, are rendering this constrained homage to the Almighty; they only submit because they cannot do otherwise; it is not their loyalty, but his power, which keeps them subjects of his boundless dominion.

4. "*All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee.*" All men must even now prostrate themselves before thee, but a time will come when they shall do this cheerfully: to the worship of fear shall be added the singing of love. What a change shall have taken place when singing shall displace sighing, and music shall thrust out misery! "*They shall sing to thy name.*" The nature and works of God will be the theme of earth's universal song, and he himself shall be the object of the joyful adoration of our emancipated race. Acceptable worship not only praises God as the mysterious Lord, but it is rendered fragrant by some measure of knowledge of his name or character. God would not be worshipped as an unknown God, nor have it said of his people, "Ye worship ye know not what." May the knowledge of the Lord soon cover the earth, that so the universality of intelligent worship may be possible: such a consummation was evidently expected by the writer of this Psalm; and, indeed, throughout all Old Testament writings, there are intimations of the future general spread of the worship of God. It was an instance of wilful ignorance and bigotry when the Jews raged against the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles. Perverted Judaism may be exclusive, but the religion of Moses, and David, and Isaiah was not so.

"*Selah.*" A little pause for holy expectation is well inserted after so great a prophecy, and the uplifting of the heart is also a seasonable direction. No meditation can be more joyous than that excited by the prospect of a world reconciled to its Creator.

5 Come and see the works of God: *he is* terrible *in his* doing toward the children of men.

6 He turned the sea into dry *land:* they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him.

7 He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.

5. "*Come and see the works of God.*" Such glorious events, as the cleaving of the Red Sea and the overthrow of Pharaoh, are standing wonders, and throughout all time a voice sounds forth concerning them—"Come and see." Even till the close of all things, the marvellous works of God at the Red Sea will be the subject of meditation and praise; for, standing on the sea of glass mingled with fire, the triumphal armies of heaven sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. It has always been the favourite subject of the inspired bards, and their choice was most natural. "*He is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.*" For the defence of his church and the overthrow of her foes he deals terrific blows, and strikes the mighty with fear. O thou enemy, wherefore dost thou vaunt thyself? Speak no more so exceeding proudly, but remember the plagues which bowed the will of Pharaoh, the drowning of Egypt's chariots in the Red Sea, the overthrow of Og and Sihon, the scattering of the Canaanites before the tribes. This same God still liveth, and is to be worshipped with trembling reverence.

6. "*He turned the sea into dry land.*" It was no slight miracle to divide a pathway through such a sea, and to make it fit for the traffic of a whole nation. He who did this can do anything, and must be God, the worthy object of adoration. The Christian's inference is that no obstacle in his journey heavenward need hinder him, for the sea could not hinder Israel, and even death itself shall be as life; the sea shall be dry land when God's presence is felt. "*They went through the flood on foot.*" Through the river the tribes passed dry-shod, Jordan was afraid because of them.

"What ail'd thee, O thou mighty sea,
Why roll'd thy waves in dread?
What bade thy tide, O Jordan, flee
And bare its deepest bed?
O earth, before the Lord, the God
Of Jacob, tremble still;
Who makes the waste a water'd sod,
The flint a gushing rill."

"*There did we rejoice in him.*" We participate this day in that ancient joy. The scene is so vividly before us that it seems as if we were there personally, singing unto the Lord because he hath triumphed gloriously. Faith casts herself bodily into the past joys of the saints, and realises them for herself in much the same fashion in which she projects herself into the bliss of the future, and becomes the substance of things hoped for. It is to be remarked that Israel's joy was in her God, and there let ours be. It is not so much what he has done, as what he is, that should excite in us a sacred rejoicing. "He is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him."

7. "*He ruleth by his power for ever.*" He has not deceased, nor abdicated, nor suffered defeat. The prowess displayed at the Red Sea is undiminished: the divine dominion endures throughout eternity. "*His eyes behold the nations.*" Even as he looked out of the cloud upon the Egyptians and discomfited them, so does he spy out his enemies, and mark their conspiracies. His hand rules and his eye observes, his hand has not waxed weak, nor his eye dim. As so many grasshoppers he sees the people and tribes, at one glance he takes in all their ways. He oversees all and overlooks none. "*Let not the rebellious exalt themselves.*" The proudest have no cause to be proud. Could they see themselves as God sees them they would shrivel into nothing. Where rebellion reaches to a great head, and hopes most confidently for success, it is a sufficient reason for abating our fears, that the Omnipotent ruler is also an Omniscient observer. O proud rebels, remember that the Lord aims his arrows at the high-soaring eagles and brings them down from their nests among the stars. "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree." After a survey of the Red Sea and Jordan, rebels, if they were in their senses, would have no more stomach for the fight, but would humble themselves at the Conqueror's feet. "*Selah.*" Pause again, and take time to bow low before the throne of the Eternal.

8 O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard:

9 Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.

10 For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.

11 Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins.

12 Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy *place*.

8. "*O bless our God, ye people.*" Ye chosen seed, peculiarly beloved, it is yours to bless your covenant God as other nations cannot. Ye should lead the strain, for he is peculiarly your God. First visited by his love, ye should be foremost in his praise. "*And make the voice of his praise to be heard.*" Whoever else may sing with bated breath, do you be sure to give full tongue and volume to the song. Compel unwilling ears to hear the praises of your covenant God. Make rocks, and hills, and earth, and sea, and heaven itself to echo with your joyful shouts.

9. "*Which holdeth our soul in life.*" At any time the preservation of life, and especially the soul's life, is a great reason for gratitude, but much more when we are called to undergo extreme trials, which of themselves would crush our being. Blessed be God, who, having put our souls into possession of life, has been pleased to preserve that heaven-given life from the destroying power of the enemy. "*And suffereth not our feet to be moved.*" This is another and precious boon. If God has enabled us not only to keep our life, but our position, we are bound to give him double praise. Living and standing is the saint's condition through divine grace. Immortal and immovable are those whom God preserves. Satan is put to shame, for instead of being able to slay the saints, as he hoped, he is not even able to trip them up. God is able to make the weakest to stand fast, and he will do so.

10. "*For thou, O God, hast proved us.*" He proved his Israel with sore trials. David had his temptations. All the saints must go to the proving house; God had one Son without sin, but he never had a son without trial. Why ought we to complain if we are subjected to the rule which is common to all the family, and from which so much benefit has flowed to them? The Lord himself proves us, who then shall raise a question as to the wisdom and the love which are displayed in the operation? The day may come when, as in this case, we shall make hymns out of our griefs, and sing all the more sweetly because our mouths have been purified with bitter draughts. "*Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.*" Searching and repeated, severe and thorough, has been the test; the same result has followed as in the case of precious metal, for the dross and tin have been consumed, and the pure ore has been discovered. Since trial is sanctified to so desirable an end, ought we not to submit to it with abounding resignation.

11. "*Thou broughtest us into the net.*" The people of God in the olden time were often enclosed by the power of their enemies, like fishes or birds entangled in a net; there seemed no way of escape for them. The only comfort was that God himself had brought them there, but even this was not readily available, since they knew that he had led them there in anger as a punishment for their transgressions; Israel in Egypt was much like a bird in the fowler's net. "*Thou laidst affliction upon our loins.*" They were pressed even to anguish by their burdens and pains. Not on their backs alone was the load, but their loins were pressed and squeezed with the straits and weights of adversity. God's people and affliction are intimate companions. As in Egypt every Israelite was a burden-bearer, so is every believer while he is in this foreign

land. As Israel cried to God by reason of their sore bondage, so also do the saints. We too often forget that God lays our afflictions upon us; if we remembered this fact, we should more patiently submit to the pressure which now pains us. The time will come when, for every ounce of present burden, we shall receive a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

12. "*Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads.*" They stormed, and hectored, and treated us like the mire of the street. Riding the high horse, in their arrogance, they, who were in themselves mean men, treated the Lord's people as if they were the meanest of mankind. They even turned their captives into beasts of burden, and rode upon their heads, as some read the Hebrew. Nothing is too bad for the servants of God when they fall into the hands of proud persecutors. "*We went through fire and through water.*" Trials many and varied were endured by Israel in Egypt, and are still the portion of the saints. The fires of the brick-kilns and the waters of the Nile did their worst to destroy the chosen race; hard labour and child-murder were both tried by the tyrant, but Israel went through both ordeals unharmed, and even thus the church of God has outlived, and will outlive, all the artifices and cruelties of man. Fire and water are pitiless and devouring, but a divine fiat stays their fury, and forbids these or any other agents from utterly destroying the chosen seed. Many an heir of heaven has had a dire experience of tribulation; the fire through which he has passed has been more terrible than that which chars the bones, for it has fed upon the marrow of his spirit, and burned into the core of his heart; while the waterfloods of affliction have been even more to be feared than the remorseless sea, for they have gone in even unto the soul, and carried the inner nature down into deeps horrible, and not to be imagined without trembling. Yet each saint has been more than conqueror hitherto, and, as it has been, so it shall be. The fire is not kindled which can burn the woman's seed, neither does the dragon know how to vomit a flood which shall suffice to drown it. "*But thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.*" A blessed issue to a mournful story. Canaan was indeed a broad and royal domain for the once enslaved tribes: God, who took them into Egypt, also brought them into the land which flowed with milk and honey, and Egypt was in his purposes *en route* to Canaan. The way to heaven is *viâ* tribulation.

> "The path of sorrow and that path alone,
> Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown."

How wealthy is the place of every believer, and how doubly does he feel it to be so in contrast with his former slavery: what songs shall suffice to set forth our joy and gratitude for such a glorious deliverance and such a bountiful heritage. More awaits us. The depth of our griefs bears no proportion to the height of our bliss. For our shame we shall have double, and more than double. Like Joseph we shall rise from the prison to the palace, like Mordecai we shall escape the gallows prepared by malignity, and ride the white horse and wear the royal robe appointed by benignity. Instead of the net, liberty; instead of a burden on the loins, a crown on our heads; instead of men riding over us, we shall rule over the nations: fire shall no more try us, for we shall stand in glory on the sea of glass mingled with fire; and water shall not harm us, for there shall be no more sea. O the splendour of this brilliant conclusion to a gloomy history. Glory be unto him who saw in the apparent evil the true way to the real good. With patience we will endure the present gloom, for the morning cometh. Over the hills faith sees the daybreak, in whose light we shall enter into the wealthy place.

13 I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows,

14 Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.

15 I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah.

13. "*I will.*" The child of God is so sensible of his own personal indebtedness to grace, that he feels he must utter a song of his own. He joins in the common thanksgiving, but since the best public form must fail to meet each individual case, he makes sure that the special mercies received by him shall not be forgotten, for he records them with his own pen, and sings of them with his own lips. "*I will go into thy house with burnt offerings:*" the usual sacrifices of godly men. Even the thankful heart dares not come to God without a victim of grateful praise; of this as well as of every other form of worship, we may say, "the blood is the life thereof." Reader, never attempt to come before God without Jesus, the divinely promised, given, and accepted burnt offering. "*I will pay thee my vows.*" He would not appear before the Lord empty, but at the same time he would not boast of what he offered, seeing it was all due on account of former vows. After all, our largest gifts are but payments; when we have given all, we must confess, "O Lord, of thine own have we given unto thee." We should be slow in making vows, but prompt in discharging them. When we are released from trouble, and can once more go up to the house of the Lord, we should take immediate occasion to fulfil our promises. How can we hope for help another time, if we prove faithless to covenants voluntarily entered upon in hours of need.

14. "*Which my lips have uttered,*" or vehemently declared; blurted out, as we say in common speech. His vows had been wrung from him; extreme distress burst open the door of his lips, and out rushed the vow like a long pent-up torrent, which had at last found a vent. What we were so eager to vow, we should be equally earnest to perform; but, alas! many a vow runs so fast in words that it lames itself for deeds. "*And my mouth hath spoken.*" He had made the promise public, and had no desire to go back; an honest man is always ready to acknowledge a debt. "*When I was in trouble.*" Distress suggested the vow; God in answer to the vow removed the distress, and now the votary desires to make good his promise. It is well for each man to remember that he was in trouble: proud spirits are apt to speak as if the road had always been smooth for them, as if no dog dare bark at their nobility, and scarce a drop of rain would venture to besprinkle their splendour; yet these very upstarts were probably once so low in spirits and condition that they would have been glad enough of the help of those they now despise. Even great Cæsar, whose look did awe the world, must have his trouble and become weak as other men; so that his enemy could say in bitterness, "when the fit was on him, I did mark how he did shake." Of the strong and vigorous man the nurse could tell a tale of weakness, and his wife could say of the boaster, "I did hear him groan; his coward lips did from their colour fly." All men have trouble, but they act not in the same manner while under it; the profane take to swearing and the godly to praying. Both bad and good have been known to resort to vowing, but the one is a liar unto God, and the other a conscientious respecter of his word.

15. "*I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings.*" The good man will give his best things to God. No starveling goat upon the hills will be present at the altar, but the well-fed bullocks of the luxuriant pastures shall ascend in smoke from the sacred fire. He who is miserly with God is a wretch indeed. Few devise liberal things, but those few find a rich reward in so doing. "*With the incense of rams.*" The smoke of burning rams should also rise from the altar; he would offer the strength and prime of his flocks as well as his herds. Of all we have we should give the Lord his portion, and that should be the choicest we can select. It was no waste to burn the fat upon Jehovah's altar, nor to pour the precious ointment upon Jesus' head; neither are large gifts and bountiful offerings to the church of God any diminution to a man's estate: such money is put to good interest and placed where it cannot be

stolen by thieves nor corroded by rust. "*I will offer bullocks with goats.*" A perfect sacrifice, completing the circle of offerings, should show forth the intense love of his heart. We should magnify the Lord with the great and the little. None of his ordinances should be disregarded; we must not omit either the bullocks or the goats. In these three verses we have gratitude in action, not content with words, but proving its own sincerity by deeds of obedient sacrifice.

"*Selah.*" It is most fit that we should suspend the song while the smoke of the victims ascends the heavens: let the burnt-offerings stand for praises while we meditate upon the infinitely greater sacrifice of Calvary.

16 Come *and* hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.

17 I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.

18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me:*

19 *But* verily God hath heard *me;* he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.

20 Blessed *be* God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

16. "*Come and hear.*" Before, they were bidden to come and see. Hearing is faith's seeing. Mercy comes to us by way of ear-gate. "Hear, and your soul shall live." They saw how terrible God was, but they heard how gracious he was. "*All ye that fear God.*" These are a fit audience when a good man is about to relate his experience; and it is well to select our hearers when inward soul matters are our theme. It is forbidden us to throw pearls before swine. We do not want to furnish wanton minds with subjects for their comedies, and therefore it is wise to speak of personal spiritual matters where they can be understood, and not where they will be burlesqued. All God-fearing men may hear us, but far hence ye profane. "*And I will declare what he hath done for my soul.*" I will count and recount the mercies of God to me, to my soul, my best part, my most real self. Testimonies ought to be borne by all experienced Christians, in order that the younger and feebler sort may be encouraged by the recital to put their trust in the Lord. To declare man's doings is needless; they are too trivial, and, besides, there are trumpeters enough of man's trumpery deeds; but to declare the gracious acts of God is instructive, consoling, inspiriting, and beneficial in many respects. Let each man speak for himself, for a personal witness is the surest and most forcible; second-hand experience is like "cauld kale het again;" it lacks the flavour of first-hand interest. Let no mock modesty restrain the grateful believer from speaking of himself, or rather of God's dealings to himself, for it is justly due to God; neither let him shun the individual use of the first person, which is most correct in detailing the Lord's ways of love. We must not be egotists, but we must be egotists when we bear witness for the Lord.

17. "*I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.*" It is well when prayer and praise go together, like the horses in Pharaoh's chariot. Some cry who do not sing, and some sing who do not cry: both together are best. Since the Lord's answers so frequently follow close at the heels of our petitions, and even overtake them, it becomes us to let our grateful praises keep pace with our humble prayers. Observe that the psalmist did both cry and speak; the Lord has cast the dumb devil out of his children, and those of them who are least fluent with their tongues are often the most eloquent with their hearts.

18. "*If I regard iniquity in my heart.*" If, having seen it to be there, I continue to gaze upon it without aversion; if I cherish it, have a side glance

of love towards it, excuse it, and palliate it; "*The Lord will not hear me.*" How can he? Can I desire him to connive at my sin, and accept me while I wilfully cling to any evil way? Nothing hinders prayer like iniquity harboured in the breast; as with Cain, so with us, sin lieth at the door, and blocks the passage. If thou listen to the devil, God will not listen to thee. If thou refusest to hear God's commands, he will surely refuse to hear thy prayers. An imperfect petition God will hear for Christ's sake, but not one which is wilfully mis-written by a traitor's hand. For God to accept our devotions, while we are delighting in sin, would be to make himself the God of hypocrites, which is a fitter name for Satan than for the Holy One of Israel.

19. "*But verily God hath heard me.*" Sure sign this that the petitioner was no secret lover of sin. The answer to his prayer was a fresh assurance that his heart was sincere before the Lord. See how sure the psalmist is that he has been heard; it is with him no hope, surmise, or fancy, but he seals it with a "*verily.*" Facts are blessed things when they reveal both God's heart as loving, and our own heart as sincere. "*He hath attended to the voice of my prayer.*" He gave his mind to consider my cries, interpreted them, accepted them, and replied to them; and therein proved his grace and also my uprightness of heart. Love of sin is a plague spot, a condemning mark, a killing sign, but those prayers, which evidently live and prevail with God, most clearly arise from a heart which is free from dalliance with evil. Let the reader see to it, that his inmost soul be rid of all alliance with iniquity, all toleration of secret lust, or hidden wrong.

20. "*Blessed be God.*" Be his name honoured and loved. "*Which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.*" He has neither withdrawn his love nor my liberty to pray. He has neither cast out my prayer nor me. His mercy and my cries still meet each other. The psalm ends on its key note. Praise all through is its spirit and design. Lord enable us to enter into it. **Amen.**

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—This Psalm is said to be recited on Easter day, by the Greek church: it is described in the Greek Bible as *A Psalm of the Resurrection*, and may be understood to refer, in a prophetic sense, to the regeneration of the world, through the conversion of the Gentiles.—*Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 1.—"*Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:*" Heb., *all the earth*; shout aloud for joy, as the people did at the return of the ark, so that the earth rang again. God shall show himself to be the God not of *Jews* only, but of *Gentiles* also; these shall as well cry *Christ*, as those *Jesus*; these say, *Father*, as those *Abba*. And, as there was great joy in Samaria when the gospel was there received (Acts viii. 8), so shall there be the like in all other parts of the earth.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 1.—"*All ye lands.*" Where, consider, that he does not sing praises well, who desires to sing alone.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 2.—"*Make his praise glorious.*" Another meaning is, *give* or *place glory*, that is, your glory *to his praise*, be fully persuaded when you praise him that it will redound to your own glory, regard this as your own glory; praise him in such a way that all your praises may be given to glorify God; or, let your glory tend in this direction that he may be praised. Desire not the glory of eternal blessedness, unless for the praise of God, as the blessed spirits in that temple do nothing but say glory to God, and sing the hymn of his glory without end, "Holy, holy, holy."—*Lorinus.*

Verse 3.—"*Say.*" *Dicite, say*, says David, delight to speak of God; *Dicite*, say something. There is more required than to think of God. Consideration,

meditation, speculation, contemplation upon God and divine objects, have their place and their season; but this is more than that, and more than admiration too; for all these may come to an end in ecstacies, and in stupidities, and in useless and frivolous imaginations.—*John Donne.*

Verse 3.—"*Unto God.*" *To* God, not *concerning* God, as some interpret, but *to God himself;* to his praises, and with minds raised to God, as it is in verse 4, *sing to himself;* Gejerus also correctly remarks, that the following discourse is addressed to God. Besides, it is to *our* God, as in verse 8, "*O bless our God, ye people:*" he is called God absolutely, because he alone is the true God.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 3.—"*How terrible.*" Take from the Bible its awful doctrines, and from providence its *terrible* acts, and the whole system, under which God has placed us, would be emasculated.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 3.—"*Thine enemies shall submit themselves unto thee.*" In this, our first consideration is, that *God himself hath enemies;* and then, how should we hope to be, nay, why should we wish to be, without them. God had good, that is, glory from his enemies; and we may have good, that is, advantage in the way to glory, by the exercise of our patience, from enemies too. Those for whom God had done most, the angels, turned enemies first; vex not thou thyself, if those whom thou hast loved best hate thee deadliest. . . . . God himself hath enemies. "*Thine enemies shall submit,*" says the text, to God; there thou hast one comfort, though thou have enemies too; but the greater comfort is, that God calls thine enemies his. *Nolite tangere Christos meos* (Ps. cv. 15), says God of all holy people; you were as good touch me, as touch any of them, for, "they are the apple of mine eye" (Ps. xvii. 8). Our Saviour Christ never expostulated for himself; never said, Why scourge you me? why spit you upon me? why crucify you me? As long as their rage determined in his person, he opened not his mouth; when Saul extended the violence to the church, to his servants, then Christ came to that, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" . . . Here is a holy league, defensive and offensive; God shall not only protect us from others, but he shall fight for us against them; our enemies are his enemies.—*Condensed from John Donne.*

Verse 3.—"*Thine enemies submit themselves.*" Literally, *lie unto thee.* This was remarkably the case with *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians.* They promised again and again to let the people go, when the hand of the Lord was upon them; and they as frequently falsified their word.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 3 (*second clause*).—In times of affliction every hypocrite—all tag and rag—will be ready to come in to God in an outward profession; but usually this submission to God at this time is not out of truth. Hence it is said, "*Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee:*" in the original it is, "*they shall lie unto thee,*" and so it is translated by Arias Montanus, and some others, noting hereby that a forced submission to God is seldom in truth.—*Jeremiah Burroughs.*

Verse 3.—The earthquakes in New England occasioned a kind of religious panic. A writer, who was then one of the ministers of Boston, informs us, that immediately after the great earthquake, as it was called, a great number of his flock came and expressed a wish to unite themselves with the church. But, on conversing with them, he could find no evidence of improvement in their religious views or feelings, no convictions of their own sinfulness; nothing, in short but a kind of superstitious fear, occasioned by a belief that the end of the world was at hand. All their replies proved that they had not found God, though they had seen "*the greatness of his power*" in the earthquake.—*Edward Payson, D.D.*

Verse 5.—"*Come and see the works of God.*" An indirect censure is here passed upon that almost universal thoughtlessness which leads men to neglect the praises of God.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 5.—"*Come and see.*" The church at all times appeals to the world,

"*Come and see*," as Jesus said to the two disciples of John the Baptist, and Philip to Nathanael. John i. 39, 46. God's marvels are to be seen by all, and *seeing* them is the first step towards *believing* in their divine author.—*A. R Fausset.*

Verse 6.—"*He turned the sea into dry land.*" The psalmist refers to the passage through the Red Sea and the Jordan, not as to transactions which took place and were concluded at a given period of time, but as happening really in every age. God's guidance of his people is a constant drying up of the sea and of the Jordan, and the joy over his mighty deeds is always receiving new materials.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 6.—"*There did we rejoice in him;*" where those things have been done, there have we rejoiced in him, not taking any credit to ourselves as if they were our acts, but rejoicing and glorying in God, and have praised him, as may be seen in Exod. xv. and Joshua iii. The prophet uses the future for the past, unless, perhaps, he meant to insinuate that these miracles would be succeeded by much greater ones, of which they were only the types and figures. A much greater miracle is that men should pass over the bitter sea of this life, and cross the river of mortality, that never ceases to run, and which swallows up and drowns so many, and still come safe and alive to the land of eternal promise, and there rejoice in God himself, beholding him face to face; and yet this greater miracle is so accomplished by God, that many pass through this sea as if it were dry land, and cross this river with dry feet; that is to say, having no difficulty in despising all things temporal, be they good or be they bad; that is to say, being neither attached to the good things, nor fearing the evil things, of this world, that they may arrive in security at the heavenly Jerusalem, where we will rejoice in him, not in hope, but in complete possession for eternity.—*Robert Bellarmine.*

Verse 7.—"*His eyes behold the nations.*" The radical meaning of the word צפה is *αὐγάζειν, to shine*, and metonymically *to examine with a bright eye;* to inspect with a piercing glance, and thence *to behold*, for either good or evil, as Prov. xv. 3: "*The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*" Here it is taken in an adverse sense, and means, to watch from a watch-tower, to threaten from a lofty place. Ps. xxxvii. 32: "*The wicked watcheth the righteous;*" and Job xv. 22: He is waited for "*from the watch-tower for the sword;*" that is to say, *the sword is drawn above the head of the wicked, as if it threatened him from the watch-tower of God.* But, at the same time, there is also a reference to God's looking from the pillar of fire, and of cloud, upon the host of Pharaoh in the Red Sea. Exod. xiv. 24.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 7.—"*His eyes behold the nations.*" This should give check to much iniquity. Can a man's conscience easily and delightfully swallow that which he is sensible falls under the cognizance of God, when it is hateful to the eye of his holiness, and renders the action odious to him? "Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?" saith Job (chap. xxxi. 4). . . . . The consideration of this attribute should make us humble. How dejected would a person be if he were sure all the angels in heaven, and men upon earth, did perfectly know his crimes, with all their aggravations! But what is created knowledge to an infinite and just censuring understanding? When we consider that he knows our actions, whereof there are multitudes, and our thoughts, whereof there are millions; that he views all the blessings bestowed upon us; all the injuries we have returned to him; that he exactly knows his own bounty, and our ingratitude; all the idolatry, blasphemy, and secret enmity in every man's heart against him; all tyrannical oppressions, hidden lusts, omissions of necessary duties, violations of plain precepts, every foolish imagination, with all the circumstances of them, and that perfectly in all their full anatomy, every mite of unworthiness and wickedness in every circumstance . . . . should not the consideration of this melt our hearts into humiliation before him,

and make as earnest in begging pardon and forgiveness of him.—*Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 9.—"*Which holdeth our soul in life.*" As the works of creation at first, and upholding all by his power and providence, are yoked together as works of a like wonder, vouchsafed the creation in common, Heb. i. 2, 3; so just in the like manner we find regeneration and perseverance joined, as the sum of all other works in this life. Thus "begotten again," and "kept by the power of God to salvation," are joined by the Apostle, 1 Pet. i. 3 and 5, "Called and preserved in Christ Jesus;" so in Jude, verse 1. . . . . "Blessed be God," says Peter, "who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again." And, "O bless our God, ye people, which holdeth our souls in life," says the psalmist. Yea, if we do narrowly eye the words in either, both Peter and the psalmist do bless God for both at once. Blessed be God for "begetting us," who are also "kept by the power of God;" so it follows in Peter. In the psalmist both are comprehended in this one word: 1. "which *putteth* our souls in life" (so the margin, out of the Hebrew), that is, who puts life into your soul at the first, as he did into Adam when he made him a living soul; 2. and then which "*holdeth*," that is, continueth our souls in that life. So the translators render it also, according to the psalmist's scope, and "O bless the Lord," saith the psalmist, for these and both these.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 9.—"*Which holdest our soul in life.*" It is truth, that all we have is in the hand of God; but God keeps our life in his hand last of all, and he hath that in his hand in a special manner. Though the soul continue, *life* may not continue; there is the soul when there is not life: life is that which is the union of soul and body. "*Thou holdest our soul in life*;" that is, thou holdest soul and body together. So Daniel describes God to Belshazzar, Dan. v. 23, "The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified." The breath of princes is in the hand of God, and the same hand holds the breath of the meanest subject. This may be matter of comfort to us in times of danger, and times of death: when the hand of man is lifted up to take thy life, remember thy life is held in the hand of God; and, as God said to Satan (Job ii. 6): Afflict the body of Job, but save his life; so God saith still to bloody wretches, who are as the limbs of Satan: The bodies of such and such are in your hands, the estates of such and such are in your hands, but save their lives.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 9.—"*Putteth our soul in life.*" An elegant and emphatic expression, only to be understood by observing the exact force of the words. The *soul* is the *life*, as is well known, the word שִׂים is *to place, to place upon, to press in*, the word תִּים signifies properly *joinings, fastenings together*, and hence those faculties and powers by which nature is held together and made firm.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 9.—"*Which holdeth our soul in life.*" He holdeth our soul in life, that it may not drop away of itself; for being continually in our hands, it is apt to slip through our fingers.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 9.—"*And suffereth not our feet to be moved.*" It is a great mercy to be kept from desperate courses in the time of sad calamities, to be supported under burdens, that we sink not; and to be prevented from denying God, or his truth, in time of persecution.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 10.—"*Thou, O God, hast proved us.*" It is not known what corn will yield, till it come to the flail; nor what grapes, till they come to the press. Grace is hid in nature, as sweet water in rose-leaves; the fire of affliction fetcheth it out.—"*Thou hast tried us as silver.*" The wicked also are tried (Rev. iii. 10), but they prove reprobate silver (Jer. vi. 28), or at best, as alchymy gold, that will not bear the seventh fire, as Job did (ch. xxiii. 10).—*John Trapp.*

Verse 10.—"*As silver is tried.*" Convinced from the frequent use of this illustration, that there was something more than usually instructive in the processes of assaying and purifying silver, I have collected some few facts upon

the subject. The hackneyed story of the refiner seeing his image in the molten silver while in the fire, has so charmed most of us, that we have not looked further; yet, with more careful study, much could be brought out.

To assay silver requires great personal care in the operator. "The principle of assaying gold and silver is very simple theoretically, but in practice great experience is necessary to insure accuracy; and there is no branch of business which demands more personal and undivided attention. The result is liable to the influence of so many contingencies, that no assayer who regards his reputation will delegate the principal processes to one not equally skilled with himself. Besides the result ascertainable by weight, there are allowances and compensations to be made, which are known only to an experienced assayer, and if these were disregarded, as might be the case with the mere novice, the report would be wide from the truth."* Pagnini's version reads: "Thou hast melted us by blowing upon us," and in the monuments of Egypt, artificers are seen with the blowpipe operating with small fire-places, with cheeks to confine and reflect the heat; the worker evidently paying personal attention, which is evident also in Malachi iii. 3, "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver."

To assay silver requires a skilfully-constructed furnace. The description of this furnace would only weary the reader, but it is evidently a work of art in itself. Even the trial of our faith is much more precious than that of gold which perisheth. He has refined us, but not with silver, he would not trust us there, the furnace of affliction is far more skilfully arranged than that.

To assay silver the heat must be nicely regulated. "During the operation, the assayer's attention should be directed to the heat of the furnace, which must be neither too hot nor too cold: if too hot, minute portions of silver will be carried off with the lead, and so vitiate the assay; moreover, the pores of the cupel being more open, greater absorption will ensue, and there is liability to loss from that cause. One indication of an excess of heat in the furnace, is the rapid and perpendicular rising of the fumes to the ceiling of the muffle, the mode of checking and controlling which has been pointed out in the description of the improved furnace. When the fumes are observed to fall to the bottom of the muffle, the furnace is then too cold; and, if left unaltered, it will be found that the cupellation has been imperfectly performed, and the silver will not have entirely freed itself from the base metals."*

The assayer repeats his trying processes. Usually two or more trials of the same piece are made, so that great accuracy may be secured. Seven times silver is said to be purified, and the saints through varied trials reach the promised rest.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 11.—"*Thou broughtest us into the net.*" etc. Our enemies have pursued us (like to wild beasts taken by the hunter) into most grievous straits (1 Sam. xiii. 6). They have used us like beasts of burden, and laid sore loads upon us, which they have fast bound upon our backs. "*Thou laidst affliction upon our loins.*" *Coarctationenem in lumbis*; we are not only hampered, as in a net, but fettered, as with chains; as if we had been in the jailor's or hangman's hands.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 12.—"*Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads.*" The agents are *men.* Man is a sociable-living creature, and should converse with man in love and tranquility. Man should be a supporter of man: is he become an overthrower? He should help and keep him up; doth he ride over him and tread him under foot? O apostacy, not only from religion, but even from humanity! *Quid homini inimicissimum? Homo.*†—The greatest danger that befalls man, comes whence it should least come, from man himself. *Cætera animantia*, says Pliny, *in suo genere, probe degunt*, &c. Lions fight not with lions; serpents spend not their venom on serpents; but man is the main suborner of mischief to his own kind. . . . .

* Encycl. Britan. † Seneca.

1. *They ride.* What need they mount themselves upon beasts, that have feet malicious enough to trample on us? They have a "foot of pride," Psalm xxxvi. 11, from which David prayed to be delivered; a presumptuous heel, which they dare lift up against God; and, therefore, a tyrannous toe, to spurn dejected man. They need not horses and mules, that can kick with the foot of a revengeful malice, Psalm xxxii. 9.

2. *Over us.* The way is broad enough wherein they travel, for it is the devil's road. They might well miss the poor, there is room enough besides; they need not ride over us. It were more brave for them to justle with champions that will not give them the way. We never contend for their path; they have it without our envy, not without our pity. Why should they ride over us?

3. *Over our heads.* Is it not contentment enough to their pride to *ride*, to their malice to ride *over us*, but must they delight in bloodiness to ride over our *heads*? Will not the breaking of our arms and legs, and such inferior limbs, satisfy their indignation? Is it not enough to rack our strength, to mock our innocence, to prey on our estates, but must they thirst after our bloods and lives? *Quo tendit sæva libido?*—Whither will their madness run? But we must not tie ourselves to the letter. Here is a mystical or metaphorical gradation of their cruelty. Their riding is proud; their riding over us is malicious; and their riding over our heads is bloody oppression.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 12. (*first clause*).—The time was when the Bonners and butchers rode over the faces of God's saints, and madefied* the earth with their bloods, every drop whereof begot a new believer.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 12.—"*Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads.*" This verse is like that sea (Matt. viii. 24) so tempestuous at first, that the vessel was covered with waves; but Christ's rebuke quieted all, and there followed a great calm. Here are cruel Nimrods riding over innocent heads, as they would over fallow lands; and dangerous passages through fire and water; but the storm is soon ended, or rather the passengers are landed. "*Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.*" So that this strain of David's music, or psalmody, consists of two notes—one mournful, the other mirthful; the one a touch of distress, the other of redress: which directs our course to an observation of *misery* and of *mercy;* of grievous misery, of gracious mercy. There is desolation and consolation in one verse: a deep dejection, as laid under the feet of beasts; a happy deliverance, "*broughtest us out into a wealthy place.*" In both these strains God hath his stroke; he is a principal in this concert. He is brought in for an *actor*, and for an *author;* an actor in the persecution, an author in the deliverance. "*Thou causest,*" etc.; "*Thou broughtest,*" etc. In the one he is a causing worker; in the other a sole working cause. In the one he is joined with company; in the other he works alone. He hath a finger in the former; his whole hand in the latter. We must begin with *misery* before we come to *mercy.* If there were no trouble, we should not know the worth of a deliverance. The passion of the saints is given, by the hearty and ponderous description, for very grievous; yet it is written in the forehead of the text, "The Lord caused it." "*Thou causedst men to ride,*" etc. Hereupon, some wicked libertine may offer to rub his filthiness upon God's purity, and to plead an authentical derivation of all his villany against the saints from the Lord's warrant: "*He caused it.*" We answer, to the justification of truth itself, that God doth ordain and order every persecution that striketh his children, without any allowance to the instrument that gives the blow. God works in the same action with others, not after the same manner. In the affliction of Job were three agents—God, Satan, and the Sabeans. The devil works on his body, the Sabeans on his goods; yet Job confesseth a third party: "The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away." Here oppressors trample on the godly, and God is said to cause it. He causeth affliction for trial (so verses 10, 11: "Thou hast tried us," etc.); they work it for malice; neither can God be accused nor they excused.—*Thomas Adams.*

* Madefy, to moisten, to make wet.

Verse 12.—"*Thou hast placed men over our heads.*" Thus Jerome renders, although the Hebrew noun, אֱנוֹשׁ, is in the singular, the word itself denotes *an obscure, mean man*, who is mentioned with indignity, but ought to be buried in oblivion. The singular noun is taken collectively, and so also is רֹאשֵׁנוּ, with the affix. Such were the Egyptian and Babylonish idolaters, whom the Hebrew served. *To place any one over the head of another*, or, as the Hebrew word הִרְכַּבְתָּ means, *to ride*, to be superior to, to subdue to oneself and subject, and to sit upon and insult, just as the horseman rules with the rein, and spur, and whip the beast which he rides.—*Lorinus.*

Verse 12.—"*To ride over our heads.*" This is an allusion to beasts of burden, and particularly to camels, whose heads the rider almost sits over, and so domineers over them as he pleases.—*Thomas Fenton, in "Annotations on the Book of Job, and the Psalms."* 1732.

Verse 12.—"*We went through fire and through water.*" The children of Israel when they had escaped the Red Sea, and seen their enemies the Egyptians dead, they thought all was cocksure, and therefore sang *Epicinia*, songs of rejoicing for the victory. But what followed within a while? The Lord stirred up another enemy against them, from out their bowels, as it were, which was hunger, and this pinched them sorer, they thought, than the Egyptian. But was this the last? No; after the hunger came thirst, and this made them to murmur as much as the former; and after the thirst came fiery serpents, and fire and pestilence, and Amalekites, and Midianites, and what not? Thus hath it been with the church not only under the law, but also under Christ, as it might be easily declared unto you. Neither hath it been better with the several members thereof; they likewise have been made conformable to the body and to the Head. What a sight of temptations did Abraham endure? So Jacob, so Joseph, so the patriarchs, so the prophets? Yea, and all they that would live godly in Christ Jesus, though their sorrow in the end were turned to joy, yet they wept and lamented first. Though they were brought at the length to a wealthy place, yet they passed through fire and water first.—*Miles Smith.* —1624.

Verse 12.—"*We went through fire and through water.*" There was a great variety of such perils; and not only of several, but of contrary sorts: "*We went through fire and through water,*" either of which singly and alone denotes an extremity of evils. Thus, through water (Ps. lxix. 1, 2): "Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me." Or, through fire (Ezek. xv. 7): "And I will set my face against them; they shall go out from one fire, and another fire shall devour them; and ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I set my face against them." But when through both successively, one after the other, this denotes an accumulation of miseries, or trials, indeed: as we read Isa. xliii. 2, with God's promise to his people in such conditions: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Which promise is here, you see, acknowledged by the psalmist to have been performed: God was with the three children when they walked through the fire, in the very letter of Isaiah's speech; and with the children of Israel when they went through the water of the Red Sea.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 12.—"*We went through fire and through water.*" In allusion, probably, to the ordeal by fire and water, which is of great antiquity.

On the question who had interred the body of Polynices:—

"All denied:
Offering, in proof of innocence, to grasp
The burning steel, to walk through fire, and take
Their solemn oath they knew not of the deed."—*Sophocles.*

From T. S. Millington's "Testimony of the Heathen to the Truths of Holy Writ." 1863.

Verse 12.—"*Fire and water.*" The Jewish law required both these for purification of spoil in war, where they could be borne. Num. xxxi. 23: "Everything that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire, and it shall be clean: nevertheless it shall be purified through the water of separation." God's saints are, therefore, subject to both ordeals.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 12.—"*But thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.*" Every word is weetly significant, and amplifies God's mercy to us. Four especially are remarkable:—1. The deliverer; 2. The deliverance; 3. The delivered; and, 4. Their felicity or blessed advancement. So there is in the deliverer, *aliquid alsitudinis*, "*Thou*;" in the delivery, *certitudinis*, "*broughtest out*," in the delivered, *solitudinis*, "*us*;" in the happiness, *plenitudinis*, "*into a wealthy place.*" There is highness and lowness, sureness and fulness. The deliverer is great, the deliverance is certain, the distress grievous, the exaltation glorious. There is yet a first word, that like a key unlocks this golden gate of mercy, a *veruntamen*:—But. This is *vox respirationis*, a gasp that fetcheth back again the very life of comfort. "*But thou broughtest*," etc. We were fearfully endangered into the hands of our enemies; they rode and trode upon us, and drove us through hard perplexities. "*But thou*," etc. If there had been a full-point or period at our misery, if those gulfs of persecution had quite swallowed us, and all our light of comfort had been thus smothered and extinguished, we might have cried, *Periit spes nostra*, yea, *periit salus nostra.*—Our hope, our help is *quite* gone. He had mocked us that would have spoken, Be of good cheer. This same *but* is like a happy oar, that turns our vessel from the rocks of despair, and lands it at the haven of comfort.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 12 (*second and third clause*).—1. The outlet of the trouble is happy. They are in fire and water, yet they get through them; we went through fire and water, and did not perish in the flames or floods. Whatever the troubles of the saints are, blessed be God there is a way through them. 2. The inlet to a better state is much more happy. "*Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place*," into a well-watered place; for the word is, *like the gardens of the Lord*, and therefore fruitful.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 12 (*last clause*).—Thou, O God, with the temptation hast given the issue. "*Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.*" 1. Thou hast proved, and thou hast brought. 2. Thou laidst the trouble, and thou tookest it off; yea, and hast made us an ample recompense, for thou hast brought us to a moist, pleasant, lovely, fertile, rich place, a happy condition, a flourishing condition of things, so that thou hast made us to forget all our trouble.—*William Nicholson, in "David's Harp strung and tuned."* 1662.

Verse 12.—"*A wealthy place.*" The hand of God led them in that fire and water of affliction through which they went; but who led them out? The psalmist tells us in the next words: "*Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place;*" the margin saith, "*into a moist place.*" They were in fire and water before. *Fire* is the extremity of heat and dryness; *water* is the extremity of moistness and coldness. *A moist place* notes a due temperament of heat and cold, of dryness and moistness, and therefore elegantly shadows that comfortable and contentful condition into which the good hand of God had brought them, which is significantly expressed in our translation by "*a wealthy place;*" those places flourishing most in fruitfulness, and so in wealth, which are neither over hot nor over cold, neither over dry nor over moist.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 13.—You see all the parts of this song; the whole concert or harmony of all is praising God. You see *quo loco*, in his house; *quo modo*, with burnt-offering; *quo animo*, paying our vows.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 13.—"*Burnt-offerings.*" For ourselves, be we sure that the best sacrifice we can give to God is obedience; not a dead beast, but a living soul. The Lord takes not delight in the blood of brutish creatures. It is the mind, the life, the soul, the obedience, that he requires: 1 Sam. xv. 22, "To obey is better than sacrifice." Let this be our burnt-offering, our holocaust, a sanctified body

and mind given up to the Lord, Rom. xii. 1, 2. First, the heart: "My son, give me thy heart." Is not the heart enough? No, the hand also: Isaiah i. 16, Wash the hands from blood and pollution. Is not the hand enough? No, the foot also: "Remove thy foot from evil." Is not the foot enough? No, the lips also: "Guard the doors of thy mouth;" Ps. xxxiv. 13, "Refrain thy tongue from evil." Is not thy tongue enough? No, the ear also: "Let him that hath ears to hear, hear." Is not the ear enough? No, the eye also: "Let thine eyes be towards the Lord." Is not all this sufficient? No, give body and spirit: 1 Cor. vi. 20, "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." When the eyes abhor lustful objects, the ear slanders, the foot erring paths, the hands wrong and violence, the tongue flattery and blasphemy, the heart pride and hypocrisy; this is thy holocaust, thy whole burnt-offering.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verses 13, 15.—In the "*burnt-offerings*," we see his approach to the altar with the common and general sacrifice; and next, in his "*paying vows*," we see he has brought his *peace-offerings* with him. Again, therefore, he says at the altar: "*I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings*" (ver. 15). This is the general offering, brought from the best of his flock and herd. Then follow the *peace-offerings*: "*With the incense* (קְטֹרֶת, *fuming smoke*) *of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah.*" Having brought his offerings, he is in no haste to depart, notwithstanding; for his heart is full. Ere, therefore, he leaves the sanctuary, he utters the language of a soul at peace with God: verses 16—20. This, truly, is one whom "*the very God of peace*" has sanctified, and whose whole spirit, and body, and soul he will preserve blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thess. v. 23.—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verses 13—15.—He tells what were the vows he promised in his trouble, and says he promised the richest sacrifices of cattle that could be made according to the law. These were three—rams, cows, and goats. Rams included lambs; cows, included heifers; and goats, kids.—*Robert Bellarmine.*

Verse 14.—"*Which my lips have uttered.*" Hebrew, *have opened;* that is which I have uttered, *diductis labiis*, with lips wide open. *Videmus qualiter vota nuncupari soleant*, saith Vatablus. Here we see after what sort vows used to be made, when we are under any pressing affliction; but when once delivered, how heavily many come off in point of payment.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 14.—Express mention is made of *opened lips* to indicate that the *vows* were made with great vehemence of mind, and in a state of need and pressure; so that his *lips* were *broken through* and widely opened. For the root, פָּצָה contains the idea of *opening* anything *with violence;* to *break open*, as the Latin expression is, *rumpere labia.*—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 15.—"*I will offer*," etc. Thou shalt have the best of the herd and of the fold.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 15.—"*Fatlings.*" For as I will not come empty into thy house, so I will not bring thee a niggardly present; but offer sacrifices of all sorts, and the best and choicest in every kind.—*Symon Patrick.*

Verse 15.—"*Bullocks with goats.*" That is, I will liberally provide for every part of the service at the tabernacle.—*Thomas Scott.*

Verse 16.—"*Come and hear, all ye that fear God.*" One reason why the saints are so often inviting all that fear God to come unto them is, because the saints see and know the great good that they shall get by those that fear God. The children of darkness are so wise in their generation as to desire most familiarity and acquaintance with those persons whom they conceive may prove most profitable and advantageous to them, and to pretend much friendship there where is hope of most benefit. And shall not the saints, the children of light, upon the same account wish and long for the society of those that fear God, because they see what great good they shall gain by them? It is no wonder that the company

of those that fear God is so much in request, since it is altogether gainful and commodious; it's no wonder they have many invitations, since they are guests by which something is still gotten; and, indeed, among all persons living, those that fear God are the most useful and enriching.—*Samuel Heskins, in "Soul Mercies Precious in the Eyes of Saints. . . . . set forth in a little Treatise on Psalm lxvi.* 16." 1654.

Verse 16.—"*All ye that fear God.*" For such only will hear to good purpose; others either cannot, or care not. "*And I will declare*," etc. Communicate unto you my soul-secrets and experiments. There is no small good to be gotten by such declarations. Bilney, perceiving Latimer to be zealous without knowledge, came to him in his study and desired him for God's sake to hear his confession. "I did so," saith Latimer, "and, to say the truth, by his confession I learned more than afore in many years. So from that time forward I began to smell the word of God, and forsake the school-doctors, and such fooleries."—*John Trapp.*

Verse 16.—"*Ye that fear God.*" Observe the invitation given to those only "*who fear God*," because "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;" he loosens the feet to "*come*," opens the ears to "*hear*;" and therefore, he who has no fear of God will be called to no purpose, either to come or to hear.—*Robert Bellarmine.*

Verse 16.—"*I will declare.*" Consider the ends which a believer should propose in the discharge of this duty ["of communicating Christian experience"]. The principal end he should have in view when he declares his experience is the glory of that God, who hath dealt so bountifully with him. He would surely have the Lord exalted for his faithfulness and goodness to him; he would have it published, that the name of the Lord might be great; that sinners might know that his God is faithful to his word; that he hath not only engaged to be "a present help in time of need," but that he hath found him in reality to be so. As he knows the enemies of God are ready enough to charge him with neglect of his people, because of the trials and afflictions they are exercised with; so he would, in contradiction to them, declare what he hath found in his own experience, that in very faithfulness he afflicts those that are dearest to him. And with what lustre doth the glory of God shine, when his children are ready to acknowledge that he never called them out to any duty but his grace was sufficient for them; that he never laid his hand upon them in any afflictive exercise, but he, at the same time, supplied them with all those supports which they stood in need of? I say, for Christians thus to stand up, on proper occasions, and bear their experimental testimony to the faithfulness and goodness of God, what a tendency hath it to make the name of the Lord, who hath been their strong tower, glorious in the midst of the earth. . . . . How may we blush and be ashamed, that we have so much conversation in the world and so little about what God hath done for our souls? It is a very bad sign upon us, in our day, that the things of God are generally postponed; while either the affairs of state, or the circumstances of outward life, or other things, perhaps, of a more trifling nature, are the general subjects of our conversation. What! are we ashamed of the noblest, the most interesting subject? It is but a poor sign that we have felt anything of it, if we think it unnecessary to declare it to our fellow Christians. What think you? Suppose any two of us were cast upon a barbarous shore, where we neither understood the language, nor the customs of the inhabitants, and were treated by them with reproach and cruelty; do you think we should not esteem it a happiness that we could unburden ourselves to each other, and communicate our griefs and troubles? And shall we think it less so, while we are in such a world as this, in a strange land, and at a distance from our Father's house? Shall we neglect conversing with each other? No; let our conversation not only be in heaven, but about spiritual and heavenly things.—*Samuel Wilson* (1703—1750), *in "Sermons on Various Subjects."*

Verse 16.—"*I will declare.*" After we are delivered from the dreadful ap-

prehensions of the wrath of God, it is our duty to be publicly thankful. It is for the glory of our Healer to speak of the miserable wounds that once pained us; and of that kind hand that saved us when we were brought very low. It is for the glory of our Pilot to tell of the rocks and of the sands; the many dangers and threatening calamities that he, by his wise conduct, made us to escape: and to see us safe on the shore, may cause others that are yet afflicted, and tost with tempests, to look to him for help; for he is able and ready to save them as well as us. We must, like soldiers, when a tedious war is over, relate our combats, our fears, our dangers, with delight; and make known our experiences to doubting, troubled Christians, and to those that have not yet been under such long and severe trials as we have been.—*Timothy Rogers* (1660—1729), *in* "*A Discourse on Trouble of Mind.*"

Verse 17.—This verse may be rendered thus:—"*I cried unto him with my mouth, and his exaltation was under my tongue*;" that is, I was considering and meditating how I might lift up and exalt the name of God, and make his praise glorious. Holy thoughts are said to be under the tongue when we are in a preparation to bring them forth.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 17.—"*He was extolled with my tongue.*" It is a proof that prayer has proceeded from unworthy motives, when the blessings which succeed it are not acknowledged with as much fervency as when they were originally implored. The ten lepers all cried for mercy, and all obtained it, but only one returned to render thanks.—*John Morison.*

Verse 17.—"*He was extolled with my tongue*:" *lit.* "an extolling (of Him was) *under* my tongue," implying *fulness* of praise (Psalm x. 7). A store of praise being conceived as *under the tongue*, whence a portion might be taken on all occasions. The sense is, "scarcely had I *cried* unto him when, by delivering me, he gave me abundant reason to extol him." (Psalm xxxiv. 6.)—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 17.—"*With my tongue.*" Let the praise of God be in thy tongue, under thy tongue, and upon thy tongue, that it may shine before all men, and that they may see that thy heart is good. The fish *lucerna* has a shining tongue,* from which it takes its name; and in the depths of the sea the light of its tongue reveals it: if thy heart has a tongue, shining with the praises of God, it will sufficiently show itself of what sort it is. Hence the old saying, "Speak, that I may see thee."—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 18.—"*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.*" The very supposition that "if he regarded iniquity in his heart, the Lord would not hear him," implies the possibility that such may be the state even of believers; and there is abundant reason to fear that it is in this way their prayers are so often hindered, and their supplications so frequently remain unanswered. Nor is it difficult to conceive how believers may be chargeable with regarding iniquity in their heart, even amidst all the solemnity of coming into the immediate presence of God, and directly addressing him in the language of prayer and supplication.

It is possible that they may put themselves into such a situation, in a state of mind but little fitted for engaging in that holy exercise; the world, in one form or another, may for the time have the ascendancy in their hearts; and there may have been so much formality in their confessions, and so much indifference in their supplications, that when the exercise is over, they could not honestly declare that they really meant what they acknowledged, or seriously desired what they prayed for. A Christian, it is true, could not be contented to remain in a state like this; and, when he is awakened from it, as he sooner or later will be, he cannot fail to look back upon it with humiliation and shame. But we fear there are seasons in which believers themselves may make a very near approach to such a state: and what then is the true interpretation of prayers

* A reviewer condemns us for quoting false natural history, but no intelligent reader will be misled thereby.—*Editor.*

offered up at such a moment? It is in fact just saying, that there is something which, for the time, they prefer to what they are formally asking of God; that, though the blessings which they do ask may be for a time withheld, yet they would find a compensation in the enjoyment of the worldly things which do at the moment engross their affections; and that, in reality, they would not choose to have at that instant such an abundant communication of spiritual influence imparted to them, as would render these worldly objects less valuable in their estimation, and would turn the whole tide of their affections towards spiritual things. . . . .

The Christian may sometimes betake himself to prayer, to ask counsel of God in some perplexity regarding divine truth, or to seek direction in some doubtful point of duty; but, instead of being prepared fairly to exercise his judgment, in the hope that, while doing so, the considerations that lie on the side of truth will be made to his mind clear and convincing; he may have allowed his inclinations so to influence and bias his judgment towards the side of error, or in favour of the line of conduct which he wishes to pursue, that when he asks counsel it may only be in the hope that his previous opinion will be confirmed, and when he seeks direction it is in reality on a point about which he was previously determined. . . . .

Another case is, I fear, but too common, and in which the believer may be still more directly chargeable with regarding iniquity in his heart. It is possible that there may be in his heart or life something which he is conscious is not altogether as it should be—some earthly attachment which he cannot easily justify—or some point of conformity to the maxims and practices of the world, which he finds it difficult to reconcile with christian principle; and yet all the struggle which these have from time to time cost him, may only have been an effort of ingenuity on his part to retain them without doing direct violence to conscience—a laborious getting up of arguments whereby to show how they may be defended, or in what way they may lawfully be gone into; while the true and simple reason of his going into them, namely, the love of the world, is all the while kept out of view. And, as an experimental proof how weak and inconclusive all these arguments are, and at the same time how unwilling he still is to relinquish his favorite objects, he may be conscious that in confessing his sins he leaves them out of the enumeration, rather because he would willingly pass them over, than because he is convinced that they need not be there; he may feel that he cannot and dare not make them the immediate subject of solemn and deliberate communing with God; and, after all his multiplied and ingenious defences, he may be reconciled to them at last, only by ceasing to agitate the question whether they are lawful or not.—*Robert Gordon, D. D.* 1825.

Verse 18.—Whence is it that a man's regarding or loving sin in his heart hinders his prayers from acceptance with God? I. The first reason is, because in this case he cannot pray by the Spirit. All prayers that are acceptable with God are the breathings of his own Spirit within us. Rom. viii. 26. As without the intercession of Christ we cannot have our prayers accepted, so without the intercession of the Spirit we cannot pray. . . . . II. The second reason is, because as long as a man regards iniquity in his heart he cannot pray in faith; that is, he cannot build a rational confidence upon any promise that God will accept him. Now, faith always respects the promise, and promise of acceptance is made only to the upright: so long, therefore, as men cherish a love of sin in their heart, they either understand not the promises, and so they pray without understanding, or they understand them, and yet misapply them to themselves, and so they pray in presumption: in either case, they have little cause to hope for acceptance. . . . . III. The third reason is, because while we regard iniquity in our hearts we cannot pray with fervency; which, next to sincerity, is the great qualification of prayer, to which God has annexed a promise of acceptance (Matt. xi 12): "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Matt. vii. 7: Those only that seek

are like to find, and those that knock to have admittance; all which expressions denote vehemence and importunity. Now, the cause of vehemence, in our prosecution of any good, is our love of it; for proportionable to the affection we bear to anything is the earnestness of our desires and the diligence of our pursuit after it. So long, therefore, as the love of sin possesses our hearts, our love to spiritual things is dull, heavy, inactive, and our prayers for them must needs be answerable. O the wretched fallacy that the soul will here put upon itself! At the same time it will love its sin and pray against it; at the same time it will entreat for grace, with a desire not to prevail: as a father confesses of himself, that before his conversion he would pray for chastity, with a secret reserve in his wishes that God would not grant his prayer. Such are the mysterious, intricate treacheries by which the love of sin will make a soul deceive and circumvent itself. How languidly and faintly will it pray for spiritual mercies; conscience, in the meanwhile, giving the lie to every such petition! The soul, in this case, cannot pray against sin in earnest; it fights against it, but neither with hope nor intent to conquer; as lovers, usually, in a game one against another, with a desire to lose. So, then, while we regard iniquity, how is it possible for us to regard spiritual things, the only lawful object of our prayers? and, if we regard them not, how can we be urgent with God for the giving of them? And where there is no fervency on our part, no wonder if there is no answer on God's.—*Robert South.* 1633—1716.

Verse 18.—"*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.*" Though the subject-matter of a saint's prayer be founded on the word, yet if the end he aims at be not levelled right, this is a door at which his prayer will be stopped: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." James iv. 3. Take, I confess, a Christian in his right temper, and he aims at the glory of God; yet, as a needle that is touched with a loadstone may be removed from its point to which nature hath espoused it, though trembling till it again recovers it; so a gracious soul may in a particular act and request vary from this end, being jogged by Satan, yea, disturbed by an enemy nearer home—his own unmortified corruption. Do you not think it possible for a saint, in distress of body and spirit, to pray for health in the one, and comfort in the other, with too selfish a respect to his own ease and quiet? Yes, surely; and to pray for gifts and assistance in some eminent service, with an eye to his own credit and applause; to pray for a child with too inordinate a desire that the honour of his house may be built up in him. And this may be understood as the sense, in part, of that expression, "*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.*" For though to desire our own health, peace, and reputation, be not an iniquity, when contained within the limits that God hath set; yet, when they overflow to such a height, as to overtop the glory of God, yea, to stand but in a level with it, they are a great abomination. That which in the first or second degree is wholesome food, would be rank poison in the fourth or fifth: therefore, Christian, catechize thyself, before thou prayest: O, my soul, what sends thee on this errand? Know but thy own mind what thou prayest for, and thou mayest soon know God's mind how thou shalt speed. Secure God his glory, and thou mayest soon know God's mind how thou shalt speed.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 18.—"*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.*"

1. They regard iniquity in their heart, who practise it secretly, who are under restraint from the world, but are not possessed of an habitual fear of the omniscient God, the searcher of all hearts, and from whose eyes there is no covering of thick darkness where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves. Jer. xxiii. 24.

2. They regard iniquity in the heart, who entertain and indulge the desire of sin, although in the course of providence they may be restrained from the actual commission of it. I am persuaded the instances are not rare, of men feeding upon sinful desires, even when through want of opportunity, through the fear of man, or through some partial restraint of conscience, they dare not carry them into execution.

3. They regard iniquity in their heart, who reflect upon past sins with delight, or without sincere humiliation of mind. Perhaps our real disposition, both towards sin and duty, may be as certainly discovered by the state of our minds after, as in the time of action. The strength and suddenness of temptation may betray even a good man into the commission of sin; the backwardness of heart and power of inward corruption may make duty burdensome and occasion many defects in the performance; but every real Christian remembers his past sins with unfeigned contrition of spirit, and a deep sense of unworthiness before God; and the discharge of his duty, however difficult it may have been at the time, affords him the utmost pleasure on reflection. It is otherwise with many; they can remember their sins without sorrow, they can speak of them without shame, and sometimes even with a mixture of boasting and vain glory. Did you never hear them recall their past follies, and speak of them with such relish, that it seems to be more to renew the pleasure than to regret the sin? Even supposing such persons to have forsaken the practice of some sins, if they can thus look back upon them with inward complacency, their seeming reformation must be owing to a very different cause from renovation of heart.

4. They regard iniquity in the heart, who look upon the sins of others with approbation; or, indeed, who can behold them without grief. Sin is so abominable a thing, so dishonouring to God, and so destructive to the souls of men, that no real Christian can witness it without concern. Hence it is so frequently taken notice of in Scripture, as the character of a servant of God, that he mourns for the sins of others. Ps. cxix. 136, 158.

5. In the last place, I suspect that they regard sin in the heart, who are backward to bring themselves to the trial, and who are not truly willing that God himself would search and try them. If any, therefore, are unwilling to be tried, if they are backward to self-examination, it is an evidence of a strong and powerful attachment to sin. It can proceed from nothing but from a secret dread of some disagreeable discovery, or the detection of some lust which they cannot consent to forsake. . . . . There are but too many who though they live in the practice of sin, and regard iniquity in their hearts, do yet continue their outward attendance on the ordinances of divine institution, and at stated times lay hold of the seals of God's covenant. Shall they find any acceptance with him? No. He counts it a profane mockery; he counts it a sacrilegious usurpation. Ps. l. 16, 17. Shall they have any comfort in it? No: unless in so far as in righteous judgment he suffers them to be deceived; and they are deceived, and they are most unhappy, who lie longest under the delusion. Ps. l. 21. Shall they have any benefit by it? No: instead of appeasing his wrath, it provokes his vengeance; instead of enlightening their minds, it blinds their eyes; instead of sanctifying their nature, it hardens their hearts. See a description of those who had been long favoured with outward privileges and gloried in them. John xii. 39, 40. So that nothing is more essential to an acceptable approach to God in the duties of his worship in general, and particularly to receiving the seals of his covenant, than a thorough and universal separation from all known sin. Job. xi. 13, 14.—*John Witherspoon* (1722—1749), *in a Sermon entitled "The Petitions of the Insincere Unavailing."*

Verses 18, 19, 20.—Lord, I find David making a syllogism, in mood and figure, two propositions he perfected. "*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me; but verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.*" Now I expected that David should have concluded thus: "Therefore I regard not wickedness in my heart; but far otherwise he concludes: "*Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.*" Thus David hath deceived, but not wronged me. I looked that he should have clapped the crown on his own, and he puts it on God's head. I will learn this excellent logic; for I like David's better than Aristotle's syllogisms, that whatsoever the premises be, I make God's glory the conclusion.—*Thomas Fuller.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 3.—The terrible in God's works of nature and providence.

Verse 4.—I. *Who?* All the earth. 1. All, collectively, all classes and tribes. 2. All numerically. 3. All harmoniously. II. *What?* Shall worship and sing. 1. Humiliation; then, 2. Exultation. III. *When?* Shall, &c. Denotes 1. Futurity. 2. Certainty. God has spoken it. All things are tending towards it.—*G.R.*

Verse 5.—Here is—I. A subject for general study: the "works of God." II. For particular study: "his doing towards," etc. 1. These are most wonderful. 2. In these we are most concerned.

Verse 6.—Great difficulties, unexpectedly overcome, made the theme of joy.

Verse 6 (*last clause*).—Our share in the past deliverances of the church.

Verse 7.—Sovereignty, immutability ("for ever"), and omniscience,—the enemies of proud rebels.

Verse 8 (*last clause*).—To get a hearing for the gospel—difficult, necessary, and possible. Ways and means for so doing.

Verses 8, 9.—I. Praise *to*. 1. As God. 2. As *our* God. II. Praise *for*. Preservation. 1. Of natural life. 2. Of spiritual life. III. Praise *by*, "ye people." 1. On your own account. 2. On account of others. Or, 1. Individually. 2. Unitedly.—*G. R.*

Verse 9.—Perseverance the subject of gratitude. I. The maintenance of the inner life. II. The integrity of the outward character.

Verse 10.—The assaying of the saints.

Verse 10.—I. The design of the afflictions. 1. To prove them. 2. To reprove them. II. The illustration of that design. As silver, etc. III. The issue of the trial.

Verses 11, 12.—The hand of God should be acknowledged. I. In our temptations: "Thou broughtest us." II. In our bodily afflictions: "Thou laidest," etc. III. In our persecutions: "Thou hast caused," etc. IV. In our deliverances: "Thou broughtest us out," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 12.—*Fire and water.* Varied trials. 1. Discover different evils. 2. Test all parts of manhood. 3. Educate varied graces. 4. Endear many promises. 5. Illustrate divine attributes. 6. Afford extensive knowledge. 7. Create capacity for the varied joys of heaven.

Verse 12 (*first clause*).—The rage of oppression.—*Thomas Adams' Sermon.*

Verse 12 (*last clause*).—A plentiful place, free from penury; a pleasant place, void of sorrow; a safe place, free from dangers and distresses.—*Daniel Wilcocks.*

Verse 12 (*last clause*).—The victory of patience, with the expiration of malice.—*Thomas Adams' Sermon.*

Verse 12 (*last clause*).—The wealth of a soul whom God has tried and delivered. Among other riches he has the wealth of experience, of strengthened graces, of confirmed faith, and of sympathy for others.

Verse 13.—God's house; or, the place of praises.—*Thomas Adams' Sermon.*

Verses 13—15.—I. Resolutions made (verse 13). 1. What? To offer praise. 2. Why? For deliverance. 3. Where? In thy house. II. Resolutions uttered (verse 14). 1. To God. 2. Before men. III. Resolutions fulfilled. 1. In public acknowledgment. 2. In heartfelt gratitude. 3. In more frequent attendance at the house of God. 4. The renewed self-dedication. 5. In increased liberality.—*G. R.*

Verse 16.—I. What has God done for the soul of every Christian? II. Why does the Christian wish to declare what God has done for his soul? III. Why does he wish to make this declaration to those only who fear God? 1. Because they alone can understand such a declaration. 2. They alone will really believe him. 3. They only will listen with interest, or join with him in praising his Benefactor.—*E. Payson*

Verse 16.—I. Religious teaching should be *simple*: "I will declare." II *Earnest*: "Come and hear." III. *Seasonable*: "All ye that." IV. *Discriminating*: "Fear God." V. *Experimental*: "What he hath," etc.

Verse 17.—I. The two principal parts of devotion. Prayer and praise. II Their degree. In prayer, crying. In praise, extolling. III. Their order 1. Prayer. 2. Then praise. What is won by prayer is worn in praise.

Verses 18, 19.—I. The test admitted. II. The test applied. III. The test approved.

Verse 19.—The fact that God has heard prayer.

Verse 20.—The mercy of God. I. In permitting prayer. II. In inclining to prayer. III. In hearing prayer.

WORK UPON THE SIXTY-SIXTH PSALM.

"*A fourth Proceeding in the Harmony of King Dauid's Harp. That is to say, A Godly and learned Exposition of six Psalmes moe of the princely Prophet Dauid, beginning with the* 62. *and ending with the* 67. *Psalme.*" Done in Latin by the reuerend Doctour VICTORINUS STRIGELIUS, Professor of Diuinitie in the vniuersitie of Lypsia in Germany, Anno 1562. Translated into English by Richard Robinson, Citizen of London. 1596. . . . . London . . . . 1596.

[The above is the "*fourth*," and, as far as we have been able to discover, the *last* part of R. Robinson's Translation of Strigelius. The four parts, separately titled and paged, contain Expositions of Pss. i.—lxvii. Dates: 1591-3-5-6.]

PSALM LXVII.

Title.—To the Chief Musician. *Who he was matters not, and who we may be is also of small consequence, so long as the Lord is glorified.* On Neginoth, *or upon stringed instruments. This is the fifth Psalm so entitled, and no doubt like the others was meant to be sung with the accompaniment of "harpers harping with their harps." No author's name is given, but he would be a bold man who should attempt to prove that David did not write it. We will be hard pushed before we will look for any other author upon whom to father these anonymous odes which lie side by side with those ascribed to David, and wear a family likeness to them.* A Psalm *or* Song. *Solemnity and vivacity are here united. A Psalm is a song, but all songs are not Psalms: this is both the one and the other.*

EXPOSITION.

GOD be merciful unto us, and bless us; *and* cause his face to shine upon us; Selah.

2 That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.

3 Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.

4 O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.

5 Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.

6 *Then* shall the earth yield her increase; *and* God, *even* our own God, shall bless us.

7 God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

1. "*God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us.*" This is a fit refrain to the benediction of the High Priest in the name of the Lord, as recorded in Num. vi. 24, 25. "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee." It begins at the beginning with a cry for *mercy*. Forgiveness of sin is always the first link in the chain of mercies experienced by us. Mercy is a foundation attribute in our salvation. The best saints and the worst sinners may unite in this petition. It is addressed to the God of mercy, by those who feel their need of mercy, and it implies the death of all legal hopes or claims of merit. Next, the church begs for a blessing; "*bless us*"—a very comprehensive and far-reaching prayer. When we bless God we do but little, for *our* blessings are but words, but when God blesses he enriches us indeed, for his blessings are gifts and deeds. But his blessing alone is not all his people crave, they desire a personal consciousness of his favour, and pray for a smile from his face. These three petitions include all that we need here or hereafter.

This verse may be regarded as the prayer of Israel, and spiritually of the Christian church. The largest charity is shown in this Psalm, but it begins at home. The whole church, each church, and each little company, may rightly pray, "bless *us*." It would, however, be very wrong to let our charity end

where it begins, as some do; our love must make long marches, and our prayers must have a wide sweep, we must embrace the whole world in our intercessions.

"*Selah.*" Lift up the heart, lift up the voice. A higher key, a sweeter note is called for.

2. "*That thy way may be known upon earth.*" As showers which first fall upon the hills afterwards run down in streams into the valleys, so the blessing of the Most High comes upon the world through the church. We are blessed for the sake of others as well as ourselves. God deals in a way of mercy with his saints, and then they make that way known far and wide, and the Lord's name is made famous in the earth. Ignorance of God is the great enemy of mankind, and the testimonies of the saints, experimental and grateful, overcome this deadly foe. God has a set way and method of dealing out mercy to men, and it is the duty and privilege of a revived church to make that *way* to be everywhere known. "*Thy saving health among all nations,*" or, *thy salvation.* One likes the old words, "saving health," yet as they are not the words of the Spirit but only of our translators, they must be given up: the word is *salvation*, and nothing else. This all nations need, but many of them do not know it, desire it, or seek it; our prayer and labour should be, that the knowledge of salvation may become as universal as the light of the sun. Despite the gloomy notions of some, we cling to the belief that the kingdom of Christ will embrace the whole habitable globe, and that all flesh shall see the salvation of God: for this glorious consummation we agonize in prayer.

3. "*Let the people praise thee, O God.*" Cause them to own thy goodness and thank thee with all their hearts; let nations do this, and do it continually, being instructed in thy gracious way. "*Let all the people praise thee.*" May every man bring his music, every citizen his canticle, every peasant his praise, every prince his psalm. All are under obligations to thee, to thank thee will benefit all, and praise from all will greatly glorify thee; therefore, O Lord, give all men the grace to adore thy grace, the goodness to see thy goodness. What is here expressed as a prayer in our translation, may be read as a prophecy, if we follow the original Hebrew.

4. "*O let the nations be glad and sing for joy,*" or, they shall joy and triumph. When men know God's way and see his salvation, it brings to their hearts much happiness. Nothing creates gladness so speedily, surely, and abidingly as the salvation of God. Nations never will be glad till they follow the leadership of the great Shepherd; they may shift their modes of government from monarchies to republics, and from republics to communes, but they will retain their wretchedness till they bow before the Lord of all. What a sweet word is that "to sing for joy!" Some sing for form, others for show, some as a duty, others as an amusement, but to sing from the heart, because overflowing joy must find a vent, this is to sing indeed. Whole nations will do this when Jesus reigns over them in the power of his grace. We have heard hundreds and even thousands sing in chorus, but what will it be to hear whole nations lifting up their voices, as the noise of many waters and like great thunders. When shall the age of song begin? When shall groans and murmurs be exchanged for holy hymns and joyful melodies? "*For thou shalt judge the people righteously.*" Wrong on the part of governors is a fruitful source of national woe, but where the Lord rules, rectitude is supreme. He doeth ill to none. His laws are righteousness itself. He rights all wrongs and releases all who are oppressed. Justice on the throne is a fit cause for national exultation. "*And govern the nations upon earth.*" He will lead them as a shepherd his flock, and through his grace they shall willingly follow, then will there be peace, plenty, and prosperity It is great condescension on God's part to become the Shepherd of nations, and to govern them for their good: it is a fearful crime when a people, who know the salvation of God, apostatize and say to the Lord "depart from us." There is some cause for trembling lest our nation should fall into this condemnation; may God forbid.

"*Selah.*" Before repeating the chorus, the note is again elevated, that full force may be given to the burst of song and the accompaniment of harps.

"Strings and voices, hands and hearts,
In the concert bear your parts;
All that breathe, your Lord adore,
Praise him, Praise him, evermore!"

5. These words are no vain repetition, but are a chorus worthy to be sung again and again. The great theme of the psalm is the participation of the Gentiles in the worship of Jehovah; the psalmist is full of it, he hardly knows how to contain or express his joy

6. "*Then shall the earth yield her increase.*" Sin first laid a curse on the soil, and grace alone can remove it. Under tyrannical governments lands become unproductive; even the land which flowed with milk and honey is almost a wilderness under Turkish rule; but, when the principles of true religion shall have elevated mankind, and the dominion of Jesus shall be universally acknowledged, the science of tillage shall be perfected, men shall be encouraged to labour, industry shall banish penury, and the soil shall be restored to more than its highest condition of fertility. We read that the Lord turneth "a fruitful land into barrenness," for the wickedness of them that dwell therein, and observation confirms the truth of the divine threatening; but even under the law it was promised, "the Lord God shall make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land for good." There is certainly an intimate relation between moral and physical evil, and between spiritual and physical good. Alexander notes that the Hebrew is in the past tense, and he concludes that it is ungrammatical to render it in the future; but to us it seems that the prophet-bard, hearing the nations praise the Lord, speaks of the bounteous harvest as already given in consequence. On the supposition that all the people praise Jehovah, the earth has yielded her increase. The future in the English appears to be the clearest rendering of the Hebrew.

"*And God, even our own God, shall bless us.*" He will make earth's increase to be a real blessing. Men shall see in his gifts the hand of that same God whom Israel of old adored, and Israel, especially, shall rejoice in the blessing, and exult in her own God. We never love God aright till we know him to be ours, and the more we love him the more do we long to be fully assured that he is ours. What dearer name can we give to him than "mine own God." The spouse in the song has no sweeter canticle than "my beloved is mine and I am his." Every believing Jew must feel a holy joy at the thought that the nations shall all be blessed by Abraham's God; but every Gentile believer also rejoices that the whole world shall yet worship the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is our Father and our God.

7. "*God shall bless us.*" The prayer of the first verse is the song of the last. We have the same phrase twice, and truly the Lord's blessing is manifold; he blesses and blesses and blesses again. How many are his beatitudes! How choice his benedictions! They are the peculiar heritage of his chosen. He is the Saviour of all men, but specially of them that believe. In this verse we find a song for all future time. God shall bless us is our assured confidence; he may smite us, or strip us, or even slay us, but he must bless us. He cannot turn away from doing good to his elect. "*And all the ends of the earth shall fear him.*" The far off shall fear. The ends of the earth shall end their idolatry, and adore their God. All tribes, without exception, shall feel a sacred awe of the God of Israel. Ignorance shall be removed, insolence subdued, injustice banished, idolatry abhorred, and the Lord's love, light, life, and liberty, shall be over all, the Lord himself being King of kings and Lord of lords. ***Amen, and Amen.***

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—How admirably balanced are the parts of this missionary song! The people of God long to see all the nations participating in their privileges, "visited with God's salvation, and gladdened with the gladness of his nation" (Psalm cvi. 5). They long to hear all the nationalities giving thanks to the Lord, and hallowing his name; to see the face of the whole earth, which sin has darkened so long, smiling with the brightness of a second Eden. This is not a vapid sentiment. The desire is so expressed as to connect with it the thought of duty and responsibility. For how do they expect that the happy times are to be reached? They trust, in the first instance, to the general diffusion of the knowledge of God's way, the spreading abroad of the truth regarding the way of salvation. With a view to that, they cry for a time of quickening from the presence of the Lord, and take encouragement in this prayer from the terms of the divinely-appointed benediction. As if they had said, "Hast thou not commanded the sons of Aaron to put thy name upon us, and to say: The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord cause his face to shine on thee and be gracious to thee? Remember that sure word of thine. God be gracious unto us and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us. Let us be thus blessed, and we shall in our turn become a blessing. All the families of the earth shall, through us, become acquainted with thy salvation." Such is the church's expectation. And who shall say it is unreasonable? If the little company of a hundred and twenty disciples who met in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, all of them persons of humble station, and unconspicuous talents, were endued with such power by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, that within three hundred years the paganism of the empire was overthrown, one need not fear to affirm that, in order to the evangelisation of the world, nothing more is required than that the churches of Christendom be baptised with a fresh effusion of the same Spirit of power.—*William Binnie.*

Whole Psalm.—There are seven stanzas; twice three two-line stanzas, having one of three lines in the middle, which forms the clasp or spangle of the septiad, a circumstance which is strikingly appropriate to the fact that the psalm is called "the Old Testament Paternoster" in some of the old expositors. —*Franz Delitzsch.*

Verse 1.—"*God be merciful unto us, and bless us,*" etc. God forgives, then he gives; till he be merciful to pardon our sins through Christ, he cannot bless or look kindly on us sinners. All our enjoyments are but blessings in bullion, till gospel grace and pardoning mercy stamp and make them current. God cannot so much as bear any good will to us, till Christ makes peace for us: "On earth peace, good will towards men." Luke ii. xiv. And what joy can a sinner take, though it were to hear of a kingdom fallen to him, if he may not have it with God's good will.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 1.—"*God be merciful unto us*"—Hugo attributes these words to penitents; "*Bless us,*" to those setting out in the Christian life; "*Cause his face to shine upon us,*" to those who have attained, or the sanctified. The first seek for pardon, the second for justifying peace, the third for edification and the grace of contemplation.—*Lorinus.*

Verses 1 *and* 2.—Connect the last clause of verse 1 with the first of verse 2, and observe that God made his face to shine upon Moses, and made known to him his way. "He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel," as if the common people could only see the deeds of the Lord, but his way, his plans, his secrets were revealed only to him upon whom the light of God's face had shone.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 2.—"*That thy way may be known,*" etc. The psalmist here supposes that there *are* certain rules or principles, in accordance with which God bestows

blessings on mankind; and he prays that those rules and principles may be everywhere made known upon the earth.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 2.—"*That thy way may be known*," etc. By nature we know little of God, and nothing of Christ, or the way of salvation by him. The eye of the creature, therefore, must be opened to see the way of life before he can by faith get into it. God doth not use to waft souls to heaven like passengers in a ship, who are shut under the hatches, and see nothing all the way they are sailing to their port; if so, that prayer might have been spared which the psalmist, inspired of God, breathes forth in the behalf of the blind Gentiles: "*That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.*" As faith is not a naked assent, with affiance and inmitency* on Christ; so neither is it a blind assent, without some knowledge. If, therefore, thou continuest still in thy brutish ignorance, and knowest not so much as who Christ is, and what he hath done for the salvation of poor sinners, and what thou must do to get interest in him, thou art far enough from believing. If the day be not broke in thy soul, much less is the Sun of Righteousness arisen by faith in thy soul.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 2.—"*That thy way may be known.*" The sinful Jew, obstinate in his unbelief, shall see and hate. He shall see, and be enraged at the salvation of the Gentiles; but let us see and *know*, that is, love. For *to know* is often put for *to love*, as in the passages—"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them: I know mine, and am known of mine;" that is, I love my own sheep, and they love me. . . . There is here a sudden transition from the third person to the second, that in speaking of God he might not say, "*His way*," or "*His salvation*," but "*Thy way*," and "*Thy salvation;*" setting forth the vehemence of an ardent suppliant, and the grace of God as he reveals himself to that suppliant while still pouring forth his prayers.—*Gerhohus* (1093—1169).

Verse 2.—"*That thy way may be known*," etc. As light, so the participation of God's light is communicative: we must not pray for ourselves alone, but for all others, that God's way may be known upon earth, and his saving health among all nations. "*Thy way;*" that is, thy will, thy word, thy works. God's will must be known on earth, that it may be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Except we know our Master's will, how shall we do it? *Ergo*, first pray with David here: "*Let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth;*" and then, "*Let all the people praise thee.*" God's will is revealed in his word, and his word is his way wherein we must walk, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left. Or, "*Thy way;*" that is, thy works, as David elsewhere (Ps. xxv. 10): "All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth." Or, as others† most fitly: "*Thy way*," that is, thy *Christ;* "*Thy saving health*," that is, thy *Jesus:* for "I am the way," saith our Saviour (John xiv. 6): "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me;" wherefore, "*Let thy Son be known upon earth; thy Jesus among all nations.*"—*John Boys.*

Verse 3.—"*Let the people praise thee.*" Mark the sweet order of the blessed Spirit: first, mercy; then, knowledge; last of all, praising of God. We cannot see his countenance except he be merciful to us; and we cannot praise him except his way be known upon earth. His mercy breeds knowledge; his knowledge, praise.—*John Boys.*

Verse 3.—"*Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.*" What then? "*Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.*" We have comforts increased, the more we praise God for what we have already received. The more vapours go up, the more showers come down; as the rivers receive, so they pour out, and all run into the sea again. There is a constant circular course and recourse from the sea, unto the sea; so there is between God and us; the more we praise him, the more our blessings

* Innitency.—Act of leaning on. † Augustine; Jerome; Hilary.

come down; and the more his blessings come down, the more we praise him again; so that we do not so much bless God as bless ourselves. When the springs lie low, we pour a little water into the pump, not to enrich the fountain, but to bring up more for ourselves.—*Thomas Manton.*

Verse 3.—This verse is exceedingly emphatic. 1. First, by an apostrophe to God, in the pronoun, Thee. As if he said: Let the people praise *thee*, not strange gods; for thou art the only true God. 2. Secondly, inasmuch as it is not said, Let *us* praise thee, O God; but let the *people* praise thee, and let *all* the people. For here is expressed the longing of the pious heart, and its fond desire that God should be praised and magnified throughout all lands and by all people of the round earth. 3. Thirdly, by the iteration, in which the same particle is repeated in this and the fifth verse no less than four times, as if the duty could not be sufficiently inculcated. It is not enough to have said it once; it is delightful to repeat it again.—*Wolfgang Musculus* (1497—1563).

Verse 4.—"*For thou shalt judge the people righteously,*" etc. The Psalmist may here seem to contradict himself; for if mercy make men rejoice, then judgment occasioneth men to tremble. Answer is made, that all such as have known the ways of the Lord, and rejoice in the strength of his salvation, all such as have the pardon of their sins assured and sealed, fear not that dreadful assize, because they know the judge is their advocate. Or, (as Jerome,) let all nations rejoice, because God doth judge righteously, being the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. Acts x. 34. Or, *let all nations rejoice*, because God doth govern all nations; that whereas theretofore they wandered in the fond imaginations of their own hearts, in wry ways, in by-ways; now they are directed by the Spirit of truth to walk in God's highway, which leads unto the celestial Jerusalem; now they shall know Christ, the way, the truth, and the life. For judging is often used for ruling. 1 Sam. vii. 15; 2 Cor. i. 10. So David doth here expound himself: "*thou shalt judge*," that is, thou shalt "*govern the nations.*"—*John Boys.*

Verse 4.—"*Govern.*" Lead and guide them as the shepherd his flock.—*Benjamin Boothroyd.*

Verse 4.—"*And lead* (margin) *the nations.*" God now *overrules* the nations in their ways, but surely they are *led* by another guide. There is a bridle in their jaws causing them to err. They are held and shaken in the sieve of vanity, until he come to whom the government pertains.—*Arthur Pridham*

Verses 5, 6.—"*Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee!*" What then? "*Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.*" Our unthankfulness is the cause of the earth's unfruitfulness. While man is blessing God *for* his mercies, He is blessing man *with* his mercies.—*William Secker, in* "*The Nonsuch Professor.*" 1660.

Verse 6.—"*Then shall the earth yield her increase.*" An increase of wealth is but the natural result of increased piety and intelligence. There are certain qualities essential to temporal prosperity. These are industry, economy, moderation; and such are the qualities begotten of godliness. . . . . Nor is it an unreasonable expectation that our globe should, under the reign of righteousness, yield all those temporal advantages of which it is capable. Science, favoured by piety, may greatly add to the earth's fruitfulness; and mechanical genius may still farther abbreviate human toil, and increase human comforts. The great inventions and discoveries of science, by which toil is lessened and comfort enhanced, are all the products of Christian minds. . . . . Can we, then, doubt that in the era to which we look forward, labour shall cease to be a burden? Can we believe that the life of the labouring classes is to continue to be all but a ceaseless round of toil and vexation—every hand stretched out to procure something that is needed, or to ward off something that is feared? Scripture predicts the mitigation of the curse; and, in the discoveries of science,

and the inventions of mechanics, we see the means by which the prediction is to be accomplished. This consummation may still be in the distant future; but if we do not grudge the oak years for its growth, the glory to be revealed is surely worthy of a process as gradual.—*William Reid, in "Things to Come Practically Considered."* 1871.

Verse 6.—"*God, even our own God, shall bless us.*" What a rapturous expression is that. "*God, even our own God, shall bless us!*" and that, "Thy God, thy glory!' Upon interest in God follows their interest in his glory and blessedness; which is so much the dearer and more valuable, as it is theirs; their glory from their God. They shall be blessed by God, their own God; "drink waters out of their own well." How endearing a thing is propriety! Another man's son is ingenuous, comely, personable; this may be a matter of envy; but mine own is so, this is a joy. I read in the life of a devout nobleman of France,* that receiving a letter from a friend in which were inserted these words: "*Deus meus et omnia*," my God and my all, he thus returns back to him: "I know not what your intent was to put into your letter these words, '*Deus meus et omnia*, My God and my all:' only you invite me thereby to return the same to you, and to all creatures. 'My God and my all; my God and my all; my God and my all.' If, perhaps, you take this for your motto, and use it to express how full your heart is of it, think you it possible I should be silent upon such an invitation, and not express my sense thereof? Likewise be it known unto you, therefore, that he is 'my God and my all;' and, if you doubt of it, I shall speak of it a hundred times over. I shall add no more, for anything else is superfluous to him that is truly penetrated with 'my God and my all;' I leave you, therefore, in this happy state of jubilation, and conjure you to beg for me, of God, the solid sense of these words." And do we think, "my God and my all," or, "my God and my glory," will have lost its emphasis in heaven? or that it will be less significant among awaked souls? These things concur, then, concerning the object; it is most excellent, even divine, entire, permanent, and *theirs*: how can it but satisfy?—*John Howe, in "The Blessedness of the Righteous."*

Verse 6.—"*Our own God.*" How unexpressible was the inward pleasure wherewith we may suppose those words to have been uttered. How delightful an appropriation! as if it were intended to be said, the blessing itself were less significant, it could not have that savour with it, if it were not from our own God. Not only, therefore, allow but urge your spirits thus to look towards God, that you may both delight in him as being in himself the most excellent one, and also as being yours; for know, you are not permitted only, but obliged to eye, accept, and rejoice in him as such.—*John Howe.*

Verses 6, 7.—The promise refers directly to the visible fertility of the renewed earth at the time of Israel's recovery, but it includes a fuller reference to higher things; for the true increase yielded by any of God's works is the revenue of praise which redounds to his holy name. Such, then, is the promise I have to bring before you. In its widest sense, the lower creation is now made subject to vanity, because of man's sin; but in the kingdom of Christ this curse will be removed, and all God's works will yield their full increase—a tribute of unmingled honour and praise to his name.

Let us consider—1. The preparation for this increase. 2. The increase itself. 3 The blessing of God, which will crown it.

I. THE PREPARATIONS FOR THIS INCREASE. What are the means? What is the way of its accomplishment? Whence does it proceed? Our Psalm is full of instruction. Consider—1. *Its fountain:* the free mercy of God. The Psalm begins, "God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us." Whatever the details and steps of the work of redemption, all must be traced up to this original fountain, the sovereign grace and mercy of our God. . . . . The eternal, free, unchangeable, inexhaustible mercy of our

* Monsieur de Renti.

God, revealed through his dear Son Jesus Christ; this is the fountain-head of the blessed increase here foretold. . . . . 2. *The order* in which this increase is granted may next be considered. Salvation is given to the Jew first, and then also to the Greek. The prayer of this Psalm is, "Cause his face to shine upon us; that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations." It is the divine plan first to choose his people and bless them, and then to make them a blessing, as we see in Abraham, the father of the faithful. It is through his church that God blesses the world. . . . . The same principle is true in every revival of pure religion. . . . . But all this order of divine mercy has yet to be more fully seen in what is before us; in the restoration of Israel, and its effect upon the world at large. . . . . 3. *The immediate precursor of this increase is the return of our Lord* from heaven, the coming of Christ to judge the earth and reign over all nations. The Psalm calls all nations to rejoice in this: "O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth." . . . . The world craves, and will crave more and more for righteous government. The Lord has promised to supply this natural want of the human heart, though he take vengeance on his hardened enemies. Even in the coming of the Lord to judgment, goodness will so finally triumph that the nations are to be glad and sing for joy. . . . . It is the Lord judging the people and governing the nations, and all the people praising him, that prepares directly and immediately for the promised blessedness. "*Then shall the earth yield her increase.*" . . . .

II. THE INCREASE ITSELF. This increase has many aspects. Let us view them in a climax of benefits. 1. *Natural fertility.* The first sentence of curse and barrenness, of thorns and thistles, was pronounced on Adam's fall, and renewed on Cain's murder. It seems to have been partially removed after the deluge. . . . . Even now, two-thirds of our world are ocean, incapable of increase; half of the rest, and perhaps more, is almost desert, and of the remainder the largest part is very imperfectly tilled. There is room, even in the latter, for a vast increase, when the whole earth might become like the garden of the Lord. 2. *The redemption of art.* Its activity, its talent, and discoveries are now great and wonderful; but it is mainly turned to human self-sufficiency and vanity, and bears little fruit to God's glory and the highest benefit of man. But in the period predicted in this Psalm, every creature, when redeemed to man's use, shall be also reclaimed to God's glory. . . . . 3. *The redemption of science.* . . . . 4. *Society will yield its increase to God.* . . . . Men now live as without God in the world, full though it be of proofs of his wisdom and love. . . . . What a change when every social circle shall be a fellowship of saints, and all bent to one great purpose, the divine glory and the blessedness of each other. 5. *The soul shall yield its increase.* The earth is only the figure of the human heart, a soil ever fertile for good or evil. Thus the apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, regards it: "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." Then the thorns and briers of a crooked and perverse generation will cease. . . . . The fruits of righteousness will abound from the human race to the glory of God. Much praise, much zeal, much reverence, much humility, will distinguish his servants. Faith, hope, and love will all be in the fullest exercise. Christ will be all and in all, and every power will be consecrated to him. This is the best increase the earth yields to God. 6. *The large number of God's true servants*, thus yielding themselves to him, is another part of this blessedness. . . . . 7. *The perpetuity of this increase* has to be added to this glory. This is according to the promise made to the Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.—*Condensed from Edward Bickersteth's Sermon in the "Bloomsbury Lent Lectures."* 1848.

Verses 6, 7.—Double blessings from God—temporal and spiritual; blessings peculiar to the Jews, and blessings suited to Christians. O Lord, I refuse not the temporal blessings it pleases thee to send me; I will receive them with humble gratitude as the gift of thy goodness: but I entreat from thee especially for spiritual blessings; and that thou wouldest treat me rather as a Christian than as a Jew.—*Pasquier Quesnel* (1634—1719), *in* "*Les Psaumes de David avec des Reflexions Morales.*"

Verse 7.—Note, how joy in God, and fear of God, are combined. By joy the sadness and anxiety of diffidence are excluded, but by fear contempt and false security are banished. So Ps. ii., "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling."—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—I. Here is mercy in God the Father. II. Here is blessing as the fruit of that mercy in God the Son. III. Here is the experience of that blessing in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.

Verse 1.—The need of seeking a blessing for ourselves.

Verses 1, 2.—The prosperity of the church at home, the hope for missions abroad.

Verse 2.—I. The way of God towards the earth. 1. A way of mercy. 2. Of blessing. 3. Of comfort. II. The knowledge of that way. 1. By outward means. 2. By inward teaching. III. The effect of that knowledge. Salvation among all nations.

Verse 2.—What is the true health of men?

Verse 3.—Viewed, I. As the desire of every renewed heart. II. As a prayer. III. As a prophecy.

Verse 4.—I. The reign of God in the world: it is not left to itself. II. The joy of the world on that account: "Let the nations," etc. III. The reason of that joy: "He will judge righteously." 1. As faithful to his law. 2. Faithful to his promises of mercy.

Verses 5—7.—I. The prayer (verse 5). II. The promise (verse 6). 1. Of temporal good. 2. Of spiritual good. III. The prediction (verse 7).

Verses 6, 7.—See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 819: "The Minstrelsy of Hope."

Verse 7.—I. God to man: "shall bless us." II. Man to God: "shall fear him."

WORKS UPON THE SIXTY-SEVENTH PSALM.

In "*The Works of* John Boys," 1626, folio, pp. 42—45, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.

PSALM LXVIII.

TITLE.—To the Chief Musician, a Psalm *or* Song of David.—*We have already said enough upon this title when dealing with Psalms LXV. and LXVI. The present is obviously a song to be sung at the removal of the ark; and in all probability was rehearsed when David conducted it with holy joy from the house of Obed-edom to the prepared place on Mount Zion. It is a most soul stirring hymn. The first verses were often the battle-song of the Covenanters and Ironsides; and the whole Psalm fitly pictures the way of the Lord Jesus among his saints, and his ascent to glory. The Psalm is at once surpassingly excellent and difficult. Its darkness in some stanzas is utterly impenetrable. Well does a German critic speak of it as a Titan very hard to master. Our slender scholarship has utterly failed us, and we have had to follow a surer Guide. We trust our thoughts may not however prove unprofitable.*

DIVISION.—*With the words of the first two verses the ark is uplifted, and the procession begins to move. In verses* 3—6, *the godly in the assembly are exhorted to commence their joyous songs, and arguments are adduced to help their joy. Then the glorious march of Jehovah in the wilderness is sung: verses* 7—10, *and his victories in war are celebrated in verses* 11—14. *The joyous shouts are louder as Zion comes in sight, and the ark is borne up the hill: verses* 15—19. *On the summit of the mount the priests sing a hymn concerning the Lord's goodness and justice; the safety of his friends, and ruin of his foes; verses* 20—23. *Meanwhile the procession is described as it winds up the hill; verses* 24—27. *The poet anticipates a time of wider conquest, verses* 28—31*: and concludes with a noble burst of song unto Jehovah.*

EXPOSITION.

LET God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.

2 As smoke is driven away, *so* drive *them* away: as wax melteth before the fire, *so* let the wicked perish at the presence of God.

1. "*Let God arise.*" In some such words Moses spake when the cloud moved onward, and the ark was carried forward. The ark would have been a poor leader if the Lord had not been present with the symbol. Before we move, we should always desire to see the Lord lead the way. The words suppose the Lord to have been passive for awhile, suffering his enemies to rage, but restraining his power. Israel beseeches him to "arise," as elsewhere to "awake," "gird on his sword," and other similar expressions. We, also, may thus importunately cry unto the Lord, that he would be pleased to make bare his arm, and plead his own cause. "*Let his enemies be scattered.*" Our glorious Captain of the vanguard clears the way readily, however many may seek to obstruct it; he has but to arise, and they flee, he has easily over-thrown his foes in days of yore, and will do so all through the ages to come. Sin, death, and hell know the terror of his arm; their ranks are broken at his approach. Our enemies are *his* enemies, and in this is our confidence of victory. "*Let them also that hate him flee before him.*" To hate the infinitely good God is infamous, and the worst punishment is not too severe. Hatred of God is impotent. His proudest foes can do him no injury. Alarmed beyond measure, they shall flee before it comes to blows. Long before the army of Israel can come into the fray, the haters of God shall flee before HIM who is the champion of his chosen. He comes, he sees, he conquers. How fitting a prayer is this for the commencement of a revival! How it suggests the true mode of conducting one:—the Lord leads the way, his people follow, the enemies flee

2. "*As smoke is driven away.*" Easily the wind chases the smoke, completely it removes it, no trace is left; so, Lord, do thou to the foes of thy people. They fume in pride, they darken the sky with their malice, they mount higher and higher in arrogance, they defile wherever they prevail. Lord, let thy breath, thy Spirit, thy Providence, make them to vanish for ever from the march of thy people. Philosophic scepticism is as flimsy and as foul as smoke; may the Lord deliver his Church from the reek of it. "*As wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.*" Wax is hard when by itself, but put it to the fire, how soft it is. Wicked men are haughty till they come into contact with the Lord, and then they faint for fear; their hearts melt like wax when they feel the power of his anger. Wax, also, burns and passes away; the taper is utterly consumed by the flame: so shall all the boastful power of the opposers of the gospel be as a thing of nought. Rome, like the candles on her altars, shall dissolve, and with equal certainty shall infidelity disappear. Israel saw, in the ark, God on the mercy-seat—power in connection with propitiation—and they rejoiced in the omnipotence of such a manifestation; this is even more clearly the confidence of the New Testament church, for we see Jesus, the appointed atonement, clothed with glory and majesty, and before his advance all opposition melts like snow in the sun: the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. When he comes by his Holy Spirit, conquest is the result; but when he arises in person, his foes shall utterly perish.

3 But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.

4 Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.

5 A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, *is* God in his holy habitation.

6 God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry *land.*

3. "*But let the righteous be glad.*" The presence of God on the throne of grace is an overflowing source of delight to the godly; and let them not fail to drink of the streams which are meant to make them glad. "*Let them rejoice before God.*" The courtiers of the happy God should wear the garments of gladness, for in his presence is fulness of joy. That presence, which is the dread and death of the wicked, is the desire and delight of the saints. "*Yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.*" Let them dance with all their might, as David did, for very joy. No bounds should be set to joy in the Lord. "Again, I say, rejoice," says the apostle, as if he would have us add joy to joy without measure or pause. When God is seen to shine propitious from above the mercy-seat in the person of our Immanuel, our hearts must needs leap within us with exultation, if we are indeed among those made righteous in his righteousness, and sanctified by his Spirit. Move on, O army of the living God, with shouts of abounding triumph, for Jesus leads the van.

4. "*Sing unto God, sing praises to his name.*" To time and tune, with order and care, celebrate the character and deeds of God, the God of his people. Do it again and again; and let the praise, with resolution of heart, be all directed to him. Sing not for ostentation, but devotion; not to be heard of men, but of the Lord himself. Sing not to the congregation, but "unto God." "*Extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name* JAH." Remember his most great, incomprehensible, and awful name; reflect upon his self-existence and absolute dominion, rise to the highest pitch of joyful reverence in adoring him. Heaven beholds him riding on the clouds in storm, and earth has seen him

marching over its plains with majesty. The Hebrew seems to be: "Cast up a highway for him who marcheth through the wilderness," in allusion to the wanderings of the tribes in the desert. The marches of God were in the waste howling wilderness. His eternal power and Godhead were there displayed in his feeding, ruling, and protecting the vast hosts which he had brought out of Egypt. The ark brought all this to remembrance, and suggested it as a theme for song. The name JAH is an abbreviation of the name Jehovah; it is not a diminution of that name, but an intensified word, containing in it the essence of the longer, august title. It only occurs here in our version of Scripture, except in connection with other words such as Hallelu*jah*. "*And rejoice before him.*" In the presence of him who marched so gloriously at the head of the elect nation, it is most fitting that all his people should display a holy delight. We ought to avoid dulness in our worship. Our songs should be weighty with solemnity, but not heavy with sadness. Angels are nearer the throne than we, but their deepest awe is consonant with the purest bliss: our sense of divine greatness must not minister terror but gladness to our souls; we should "rejoice before him."

It should be our wish and prayer, that in this wilderness world, a highway may be prepared for the God of grace. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God," is the cry of gospel heralds, and we must all zealously aim at obedience thereto; for where the God of the mercy-seat comes, blessings innumerable are given to the sons of men.

5. "*A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.*" In the wilderness the people were like an orphan nation, but God was more than a father to them. As the generation which came out of Egypt gradually died away, there were many widows and fatherless ones in the camp, but they suffered no want or wrong, for the righteous laws and the just administrators whom God had appointed, looked well to the interests of the needy. The tabernacle was the Palace of Justice; the ark was the seat of the great King. This was great cause for joy to Israel, that they were ruled by ONE who would not suffer the poor and needy to be oppressed. To this day and for ever, God is, and will be, the peculiar guardian of the defenceless. He is the President of Orphanages, the Protector of Widows. He is so glorious that he rides on the heavens, but so compassionate that he remembers the poor of the earth. How zealously ought his church to cherish those who are here marked out as Jehovah's especial charge. Does he not here in effect say, "Feed my lambs?" Blessed duty, it shall be our privilege to make this one of our life's dearest objects. The reader is warned against mis-quoting this verse; it is generally altered into "*the husband* of the widow," but Scripture had better be left as God gave it.

6. "*God setteth the solitary in families.*" The people had been sundered and scattered over Egypt; family ties had been disregarded, and affections crushed; but when the people escaped from Pharaoh they came together again, and all the fond associations of household life were restored. This was a great joy. "*He bringeth out those which are bound with chains.*" The most oppressed in Egypt were chained and imprisoned, but the divine Emancipator brought them all forth into perfect liberty. He who did this of old continues his gracious work. The solitary heart, convinced of sin and made to pine alone, is admitted into the family of the First-born; the fettered spirit is set free, and its prison broken down, when sin is forgiven; and for all this, God is to be greatly extolled, for he hath done it, and magnified the glory of his grace. "*But the rebellious dwell in a dry land.*" If any find the rule of Jehovah to be irksome, it is because their rebellious spirits kick against his power. Israel did not find the desert dry, for the smitten rock gave forth its streams; but even in Canaan itself men were consumed with famine, because they cast off their allegiance to their covenant God. Even where God is revealed on the mercy-seat, some men persist in rebellion, and such need not wonder if they find no peace, no comfort, no joy, even where all these abound. Justice is the rule of

the Lord's kingdom, and hence there is no provision for the unjust to indulge their evil lustings: a perfect earth, and even heaven itself, would be a dry land to those who can only drink of the waters of sin. Of the most soul-satisfying of sacred ordinances these witless rebels cry, "what a weariness it is!" and, under the most soul-sustaining ministry, they complain of "the foolishness of preaching." When a man has a rebellious heart, he must of necessity find all around him a dry land.

7 O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah:

8 The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: *even* Sinai itself *was moved* at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

9 Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary.

10 Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.

7. "*O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people.*" What a sweetly suitable association, "thou" and "thy people;"—thou before, and thy people following! The Lord went before, and, therefore, whether the Red Sea or burning sand lay in the way, it mattered not; the pillar of cloud and fire always led them by a right way. "*When thou didst march through the wilderness.*" He was the Commander-in-chief of Israel, from whom they received all orders, and the march was therefore *his* march. "His stately step the region drear beheld." We may speak, if we will, of the "wanderings of the children of Israel," but we must not think them purposeless strayings, they were in reality a well-arranged and well considered march.

"SELAH." This seems an odd place for a musical pause or direction, but it is better to break a sentence than spoil praise. The sense is about to be superlatively grand, and, therefore, the *selah* intimates the fact to the players and singers, that they may with suitable solemnity perform their parts. It is never untimely to remind a congregation that the worship of God should be thoughtfully and heartily presented.

8. "*The earth shook.*" Beneath the sublime tread the solid ground trembled. "*The heavens also dropped at the presence of God,*" as if they bowed before their God, the clouds descended, and "a few dark shower-drops stole abroad." "*Even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God.*" Moses tells us, in Ex. xix., that "the whole mountain quaked greatly." That hill, so lone and high, bowed before the manifested God. "*The God of Israel.*" The one only living and true God, whom Israel worshipped, and who had chosen that nation to be his own above all the nations of the earth. This passage is so sublime, that it would be difficult to find its equal. May the reader's heart adore the God before whom the unconscious earth and sky act as if they recognised their Maker and were moved with a tremor of reverence.

9. "*Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain.*" The march of God was not signalized solely by displays of terror, for goodness and bounty were also made conspicuous. Such rain as never fell before dropped on the desert sand, bread from heaven and winged fowls fell all around the host; good gifts were poured upon them, rivers leaped forth from rocks. The earth shook with fear, and in reply, the Lord, as from a cornucopia, shook out blessings upon it; so the original may be rendered. "*Whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary.*" As at the end of each stage, when they halted, weary with the march, they found such showers of good things awaiting them that they were speedily refreshed. Their foot did not swell all those forty years. When they were exhausted, God was not. When they were weary, he was not. They were his chosen heritage, and, therefore,

although for their good he allowed them to be weary, yet he watchfully tended them and tenderly considered their distresses. In like manner, to this day, the elect of God in this wilderness state are apt to become tired and faint, but their ever-loving Jehovah comes in with timely succours, cheers the faint, strengthens the weak, and refreshes the hungry; so that once again, when the silver trumpets sound, the church militant advances with bold and firm step towards "the rest which remaineth." By this faithfulness, the faith of God's people is confirmed, and their hearts stablished; if fatigue and want made them waver, the timely supply of grace stays them again upon the eternal foundation.

10. "*Thy congregation hath dwelt therein.*" In the wilderness itself, enclosed as in a wall of fire, thy chosen church has found a home; or, rather, girdled by the shower of free gifts which fell all around the camp, thy flock has rested. The congregation of the faithful find the Lord to be their "dwelling-place in all generations." Where there were no dwellings of men, God was the dwelling of his people. "*Thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.*" Within the guarded circle there was plenty for all; all were poor in themselves, yet there were no beggars in all the camp, for celestial fare was to be had for the gathering. We, too, still dwell within the circling protection of the Most High, and find goodness made ready for us: although poor and needy by nature, we are enriched by grace; divine preparations in the decree, the covenant, the atonement, providence, and the Spirit's-work, have made ready for us a fulness of the blessing of the Lord. Happy people, though in the wilderness, for all things are ours, in possessing the favour and presence of our God.

11 The Lord gave the word: great *was* the company of those that published *it*.

12 Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.

13 Though ye have lien among the pots, *yet shall ye be as* the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.

14 When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was *white* as snow in Salmon.

11. In the next verses we do not sing of marching, but of battle and victory "*The Lord gave the word.*" The enemy was near, and the silver trumpet from the tabernacle door was God's mouth to warn the camp then was there hurrying to and fro, and a general telling of the news; "*great was the company of those that published it.*" The women ran from tent to tent and roused their lords to battle. Ready as they always were to chant the victory, they were equally swift to publish the fact that the battle-note had been sounded. The ten thousand maids of Israel, like good handmaids of the Lord, aroused the sleepers, called in the wanderers, and bade the valiant men hasten to the fray. O for the like zeal in the church to-day, that, when the gospel is published, both men and women may eagerly spread the glad tidings of great joy.

12. "*Kings of armies did flee apace.*" The lords of hosts fled before the Lord of Hosts. No sooner did the ark advance than the enemy turned his back: even the princely leaders stayed not, but took to flight. The rout was complete, the retreat hurried and disorderly;—they "did flee, did flee;" helter skelter, pell-mell, as we say.

> "Where are the kings of mighty hosts?
> Fled far away, fled far and wide.
> Their triumph and their trophied boasts
> The damsels in their bowers divide."

"*And she that tarried at home divided the spoil.*" The women who had published the war-cry shared the booty. The feeblest in Israel had a portion of the prey. Gallant warriors cast their spoils at the feet of the women and bade

them array themselves in splendour, taking each one "a prey of divers colours, of divers colours of needlework on both sides." When the Lord gives success to his gospel, the very least of his saints are made glad and feel themselves partakers in the blessing.

13. "*Though ye have lien among the pots.*" Does he mean that the women at home, who had been meanly clad as they performed their household work, would be so gorgeously arrayed in the spoil, that they would be like doves of silver wing and golden plumage? Or, would he say that Israel, which had been begrimed in the brick-kilns of Egypt, should come forth lustrous and happy in triumph and liberty? Or, did the song signify that the ark should be brought from its poor abode with Obed-edom into a fairer dwelling-place? It is a hard passage, a nut for the learned to crack. If we knew all that was known when this ancient hymn was composed, the allusion would no doubt strike us as being beautifully appropriate, but as we do not, we will let it rest among the unriddled things. Alexander reads it, "When ye shall lie down between the borders, ye shall be like the wings," &c., which he considers to mean, "when settled in peace, the land shall enjoy prosperity;" but this version does not seem to us any more clear than our authorized one. Of making many conjectures there is no end; but the sense seems to be, that from the lowest condition the Lord would lift up his people into joy, liberty, wealth, and beauty. Their enemies may have called them squatters among the pots—in allusion to their Egyptian slavery; they may have jested at them as scullions of Pharaoh's kitchen; but the Lord would avenge them and give them beauty for blackness, glory for grime. "*Yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.*" The dove's wing flashes light like silver, and anon gleams with the radiance of "the pale, pure gold." The lovely, changeable colours of the dove might well image the mild, lustrous beauty of the nation, when arrayed in white holiday-attire, bedecked with their gems, jewels, and ornaments of gold. God's saints have been in worse places than among the pots, but now they soar aloft into the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

14. "*When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon.*" The victory was due to the Almighty arm alone; he scattered the haughty ones who came against his people, and he did it as easily as snow is driven from the bleak sides of Salmon. The word *white* appears to be imported into the text, and by leaving it out the sense is easy. A traveller informed the writer that on a raw and gusty day, he saw the side of what he supposed to be Mount Salmon suddenly swept bare by a gust of wind, so that the snow was driven hither and thither into the air like the down of thistles, or the spray of the sea: thus did the Omnipotent one scatter all the potentates that defied Israel. If our authorized version must stand, the conjectures that the bleached bones of the enemy, or the royal mantles cast away in flight, whitened the battle-field, appear to be rather too far-fetched for sacred poetry. Another opinion is, that Salmon was covered with dark forests, and appeared black, but presented quite another aspect when the snow covered it, and that by this noteworthy change, from sombre shade to gleaming whiteness, the poet sets forth the change from war to peace. Whatever may be the precise meaning, it was intended to pourtray the glory and completeness of the divine triumph over the greatest foes. In this let all believers rejoice.

15 The hill of God *is as* the hill of Bashan; an high hill *as* the hill of Bashan.

16 Why leap ye, ye high hills? *this is* the hill *which* God desireth to dwell in; yea, the LORD will dwell *in it* for ever.

17 The chariots of God *are* twenty thousand, *even* thousands of angels: the Lord *is* among them, *as in* Sinai, in the holy *place.*

18 Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, *for* the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell *among them.*

19 Blessed *be* the Lord, *who* daily loadeth us *with benefits, even* the God of our salvation. Selah.

15. Here the priests on the summit of the chosen hill begin to extol the Lord for his choice of Zion as his dwelling-place. "*The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan,*" or more accurately, "a hill of God is Bashan," that is to say, Bashan is an eminent mountain, far exceeding Zion in height. According to the Hebrew custom, every great or remarkable thing is thus designated. Where we talk of the Devil's Dyke, the Devil's Ditch, the Devil's Punch Bowl, etc., the more commendable idiom of the Hebrews speaks of the hill of God, the trees of the Lord, the river of God, etc. "*An high hill as the hill of Bashan,*" or rather, "a mount of peaks is Bashan." It does not appear that Zion is compared with Bashan, but contrasted with it. Zion certainly was not a high hill comparatively; and it is here conceded that Bashan is a greater mount, but not so glorious, for the Lord in choosing Zion had exalted it above the loftier hills. The loftiness of nature is made as nothing before the Lord. He chooses as pleases him, and, according to the counsel of his own will, he selects Zion, and passes by the proud, uplifted peaks of Bashan; thus doth he make the base things of this world, and things that are despised, to become monuments of his grace and sovereignty.

16. "*Why leap ye, ye high hills?*" Why are ye moved to envy? Envy as ye may, the Lord's choice is fixed. Lift up yourselves, and even leap from your seats, ye cannot reach the sublimity which Jehovah's presence has bestowed on the little hill of Moriah. "*This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in.*" Elohim makes Zion his abode, yea, Jehovah resides there. "*Yea, the Lord will dwell in it for ever.*" Spiritually the Lord abides eternally in Zion, his chosen church, and it was Zion's glory to be typical thereof. What were Carmel and Sirion, with all their height, compared to Zion, the joy of the whole earth! God's election is a patent of nobility. They are choice men whom God has chosen, and that place is superlatively honoured which he honours with his presence.

17. "*The chariots of God are twenty thousand.*" Other countries, which in the former verse were symbolically referred to as "high hills," gloried in their chariots of war; but Zion, though far more lowly, was stronger than they, for the omnipotence of God was to her as two myriads of chariots. The Lord of Hosts could summon more forces into the field than all the petty lords who boasted in their armies: his horses of fire and chariots of fire would be more than a match for their fiery steeds and flashing cars. The original is grandly expressive. "the war-chariots of Elohim are myriads, a thousand thousands." The marginal reading of our Bibles, "*even many thousands,*" is far more correct than the rendering, "*even thousands of angels.*" It is not easy to see where our venerable translators found these "angels," for they are not in the text; however, as it is a blessing to entertain them unawares, we are glad to meet with them in English, even though the Hebrew knows them not; and the more so because it cannot be doubted that they constitute a right noble squadron of the myriad hosts of God. We read in Deuteronomy xxxiii. 2, of the Lord's coming "with ten thousands of saints," or holy ones, and in Heb. xii. 22, we find upon mount Zion "an innumerable company of angels," so that our worthy translators putting the texts together, inferred the angels, and the clause is so truthfully explanatory, that we have no fault to find with it. "*The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place,*" or, "it is a Sinai in holiness." God is in Zion as the Commander-in-chief of his countless hosts, and where he is, there is holiness The throne of grace on Zion is as holy as the throne of justice on Sinai The displays of his glory may not

be so terrible under the new covenant as under the old; but they are even more marvellous if seen by the spiritual eye. Sinai has no excellency of glory beyond Zion; but the rather it pales its light of law before the noontide splendours of Zion's grace and truth. How joyful was it to a pious Hebrew to know that God was as truly with his people in the tabernacle and temple as amid the terrors of the Mount of Horeb; but it is even more heart-cheering to us to be assured that the Lord abides in his church, and has chosen it to be his rest for ever. May we be zealous for the maintenance of holiness in the spiritual house which God condescends to occupy: let a sense of his presence consume, as with flames of fire, every false way. The presence of God is the strength of the church; all power is ours when God is ours. Twenty thousand chariots shall bear the gospel to the ends of the earth; and myriads of agencies shall work for its success. Providence is on our side, and it "has servants everywhere." There is no room for a shade of doubt or discouragement, but every reason for exultation and confidence.

18. "*Thou hast ascended on high.*" The ark was conducted to the summit of Zion; God himself took possession of the high places of the earth, being extolled and very high. The antitype of the ark, the Lord Jesus, has ascended into the heavens with signal marks of triumph. To do battle with our enemies, the Lord descended and left his throne; but now the fight is finished, he returns to his glory; high above all things is he now exalted. "*Thou hast led captivity captive.*" A multitude of the sons of men are the willing captives of Messiah's power. As great conquerors of old led whole nations into captivity, so Jesus leads forth from the territory of his foe a vast company as the trophies of his mighty grace. From the gracious character of his reign it comes to pass that to be led into captivity by him is for our captivity to cease, or to be itself led captive; a glorious result indeed. The Lord Jesus destroys his foes with their own weapons; he puts death to death, entombs the grave, and leads captivity captive. "*Thou hast received gifts for men,*" or, received gifts among men: they have paid thee tribute, O mighty Conqueror, and shall in every age continue to do so willingly, delighting in thy reign. Paul's rendering is the gospel one: Jesus has "received gifts for men," of which he makes plentiful distribution, enriching his church with the priceless fruits of his ascension, such as apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, and all their varied endowments. In him, the man who received gifts for man, we are endowed with priceless treasures, and, moved with gratitude, we return gifts to him, yea, we give him ourselves, our all. "*Yea, for the rebellious also:*" these gifts the rebels are permitted to share in; subdued by love, they are indulged with the benefits peculiar to the chosen. The original runs, "even the rebellious," or, "even from the rebellious," of which the sense is that rebels become captives to the Lord's power, and tributaries to his throne.

> "Great King of grace my heart subdue,
> I would be led in triumph too;
> A willing captive to my Lord,
> To own the conquests of his word."

"*That the Lord God might dwell among them.*" In the conquered territory, Jah Elohim would dwell as Lord of all, blessing with his condescending nearness those who were once his foes. When Canaan was conquered, and the fort of Zion carried by storm, then was there found a resting-place for the ark of God; and so when the weapons of victorious grace have overcome the hearts of men, the Lord God, in all the glory of his name, makes them to be his living temples. Moreover, the ascension of Jesus is the reason for the descent of the Lord God, the Holy Spirit. Because Jesus dwells with God, God dwells with men. Christ on high is the reason of the Spirit below. It was expedient that the Redeemer should rise, that the Comforter should come down.

19. "*Blessed be the Lord.*" At the mention of the presence of God among men the singers utter an earnest acclamation suggested by reverential love, and return blessings to him who so plentifully blesses his people. "*Who*

daily loadeth us with benefits." Our version contains a great and precious truth, though probably not the doctrine intended here. God's benefits are not few nor light, they are loads; neither are they intermittent, but they come "daily;" nor are they confined to one or two favourites, for all Israel can say, "he loadeth *us* with benefits." Delitzsch reads it, "He daily bears our burden;" and Alexander, "Whoever lays a load upon us, the Mighty God is our salvation." If he himself burdens us with sorrow, he gives strength sufficient to sustain it; and if others endeavour to oppress us, there is no cause for fear, for the Lord will come to the rescue of his people. Happy nation, to be subdued by a King whose yoke is easy, and who secures his people from all fear of foreign burdens which their foes might try to force upon them. "*Even the God of our salvation.*" A name most full of glory to him, and consolation to us. No matter how strong the enemy, we shall be delivered out of his hands; for God himself, as King, undertakes to save his people from all harm. What a glorious stanza this is! It is dark only because of its excessive light. A world of meaning is condensed into a few words. His yoke is easy, and his burden is light, therefore blessed be the Saviour's name for evermore. All hail! thou thrice blessed Prince of Peace! All thy saved ones adore thee, and call thee blessed.

"*Selah.*" Well may the strings need tuning, they have borne an unparalleled strain in this mighty song. Higher and yet higher, ye men of music, lift up the strain. Dance before the ark, ye maidens of Israel; bring forth the timbrel, and sing unto the Lord who hath triumphed gloriously.

20 *He that is* our God *is* the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord *belong* the issues from death.

21 But God shall wound the head of his enemies, *and* the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.

22 The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring *my people* again from the depths of the sea:

23 That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of *thine* enemies, *and* the tongue of thy dogs in the same.

20. "*He that is our God is the God of salvation.*" The Almighty who has entered into covenant with us is the source of our safety, and the author of our deliverances. As surely as he is our God he will save us. To be his is to be safe. "*And unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.*" He has ways and means of rescuing his children from death: when they are at their wit's end, and see no way of escape, he can find a door of deliverance for them. The gates of the grave none can open but himself, we shall only pass into them at his bidding; while on the heaven-ward side he has set open the doors for all his people, and they shall enjoy triumphant issues from death. Jesus, our God, will save his people from their sins, and from all else besides, whether in life or death.

21. "*But God shall wound the head of his enemies.*" The Preserver is also the Destroyer. He smites his foes on the crown of their pride. The seed of the woman crushes the serpent's head. There is no defence against the Lord, he can in a moment smite with utter destruction the lofty crests of his haughty foes. "*And the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.*" He may glory in his outward appearance, and make his hair his pride, as Absalom did; but the Lord's sword shall find him out, and pour out his soul. Headstrong sinners will find that providence overcomes them despite their strong heads. They who go on in sin will find judgments come on them; and the adornment of their pride may be made the instrument of their doom. He covers the head of his servants, but he crushes the head of his foes. At the second coming of the Lord Jesus, his enemies will find his judgments to be beyond conception terrible.

22. This verse, by the insertion of the words, "*my people*," is made to bear the meaning which the translators thought best; but, if their interpolated word is omitted, we probably get nearer to the sense. "*The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring again from the depths of the sea.*" Though his foes should endeavour to escape, they should not be able. Amos describes the Lord as saying, "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: and though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them." As there is no resisting Israel's God, so is there no escape from him, neither the heights of Bashan nor the depths of the great sea can shelter from his eye of detection, and his hand of justice. The powers of evil may flee to the utmost ends of the earth, but the Lord will arrest them, and lead them back in chains to adorn his triumph.

23. "*That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies.*" Vengeance shall be awarded to the oppressed people, and that most complete and terrible. "*And the tongue of thy dogs in the same.*" So overwhelming should be the defeat of the foe that dogs should lick their blood. Here "the stern joy which warriors feel" expresses itself in language most natural to the oriental ear. To us, except in a spiritual sense, the verse sounds harshly; but read it with an inner sense, and we also desire the utter and crushing defeat of all evil, and that wrong and sin may be the objects of profound contempt. Terrible is the God of Israel when he cometh forth as a man of war, and dreadful is even the Christ of God when he bares his arm to smite his enemies. Contemplate Rev. xix. and note the following:—"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. . . . . And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

24 They have seen thy goings, O God; *even* the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.

25 The singers went before, the players on instruments *followed* after; among *them were* the damsels playing with timbrels.

26 Bless ye God in the congregations, *even* the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.

27 There *is* little Benjamin *with* their ruler, the princes of Judah *and* their council, the princes of Zebulun, *and* the princes of Naphtali.

24. "*They have seen thy goings, O God.*" In the song the marchings of

the Lord had been described; friends and foes had seen his goings forth with the ark and his people. We suppose that the procession was now climbing the hill, and entering the enclosure where the tabernacle of the ark was pitched; it was suitable at this moment to declare with song that the tribes had seen the glorious progress of the Lord as he led forth his people. "*Even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.*" The splendid procession of the ark, which symbolised the throne of the great King, was before the eyes of men and angels as it ascended to the holy place; and the psalmist points to it with exultation before he proceeds to describe it. All nature and providence are, as it were, a procession attending the great Lord, in his visitations of this lower globe. Winter and summer, sun and moon, storm and calm, and all the varied glories of nature swell the pomp of the King of kings, of whose dominion there is no end.

25. "*The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after.*" This was the order of the march, and God is to be worshipped evermore with due decorum. First the singers, and lastly the musicians, for the song must lead the music, and not the music drown the singing. In the midst of the vocal and instrumental band, or all around them, were the maidens: "*among them were the damsels playing with timbrels.*" Some have imagined that this order indicates the superiority of vocal to instrumental music; but we need not go so far for arguments, when the simplicity and spirituality of the gospel already teach us that truth. The procession depicted in this sublime song was one of joy, and every means was taken to express the delight of the nation in the Lord their God.

26. "*Bless ye God in the congregations.*" Let the assembled company magnify the God whose ark they followed. United praise is like the mingled perfume which Aaron made, it should all be presented unto God. He blesses us; let him be blessed. "*Even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.*" A parallel passage to that in Deborah's song: "They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord." The seat of the ark would be the fountain of refreshing for all the tribes, and there they were to celebrate his praises. "Drink," says the old inscription, "drink, weary traveller; drink and pray." We may alter one word, and read it, drink and praise. If the Lord overflows with grace, we should overflow with gratitude. Ezekiel saw an ever-growing stream flow from under the altar, and issue out from under the threshold of the sanctuary, and wherever it flowed it gave life: let as many as have quaffed this life-giving stream glorify "the fountain of Israel."

27. "*There is little Benjamin with their ruler.*" The tribe was small, having been greatly reduced in numbers, but it had the honour of including Zion within its territory. "And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders." Little Benjamin had been Jacob's darling, and now the tribe is made to march first in the procession, and to dwell nearest to the holy place. "*The princes of Judah and their council.*" Judah was a large and powerful tribe, not with one governor, like Benjamin, but with many princes "and their company," for so the margin has it. "From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel," and the tribe was a quarry of stones wherewith to build up the nations: some such truth is hinted at in the Hebrew. "*The princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali.*" Israel was there, as well as Judah; there was no schism among the people. The north sent a representative contingent as well as the south, and so the long procession set forth the hearty loyalty of all the tribes to their Lord and King. O happy day, when all believers shall be one around the ark of the Lord; striving for nothing but the glory of the God of grace.

28 Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.

29 Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee.

30 Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, *till every one* submit himself with pieces of silver: scatter thou the people *that* delight in war.

31 Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.

The prophet now puts into the mouth of the assembly a song, foretelling the future conquests of Jehovah.

28. "*Thy God hath commanded thy strength.*" His decree had ordained the nation strong, and his arm had made them so. As a commander-in-chief, the Lord made the valiant men pass in battle array, and bade them be strong in the day of conflict. This is a very rich though brief sentence, and, whether applied to an individual believer, or to the whole church, it is full of consolation. "*Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.*" As all power comes from God at first, so its continual maintenance is also of him. We who have life should pray to have it "more abundantly;" if we have strength we should seek to be still more established. We expect God to bless his own work. He has never left any work unfinished yet, and he never will. "When we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly;" and now, being reconciled to God, we may look to him to perfect that which concerneth us, since he never forsakes the work of his own hands.

29. "*Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee*" The palace of God, which towered above Jerusalem, is prophesied as becoming a wonder to all lands, and when it grew from the tabernacle of David to the temple of Solomon, it was so. So splendid was that edifice that the queen of far-off Sheba came with her gifts; and many neighbouring princes, overawed by the wealth and power therein displayed, came with tribute to Israel's God. The church of God, when truly spiritual, wins for her God the homage of the nations. In the latter-day glory this truth shall be far more literally and largely verified.

30. "*Rebuke the company of spearmen;*" or, "*the beasts of the reeds,*" as the margin more correctly renders it. Speak to Egypt, let its growing power and jealousy be kept in order, by a word from thee. Israel remembers her old enemy, already plotting the mischief, which would break out under Jeroboam, and begs for a rebuking word from her Omnipotent Friend. Anti-christ also, that great red dragon, needs the effectual word of the Lord to rebuke its insolence. "*The multitude of the bulls,*" the stronger foes; the proud, headstrong, rampant, fat, and roaring bulls, which sought to gore the chosen nation,—these also need the Lord's rebuke, and they shall have it too. All Egypt's sacred bulls could not avail against a "thus saith Jehovah." Popish bulls, and imperial edicts, have dashed against the Lord's church, but they have not prevailed against her, and they never shall. "*With the calves of the people.*" The poorer and baser sort are equally set on mischief, but the divine voice can control them; multitudes are as nothing to the Lord when he goes forth in power; whether bulls or calves, they are but cattle for the shambles when Omnipotence displays itself. The gospel, like the ark, has nothing to fear from great or small; it is a stone upon which every one that stumbleth shall be broken. "*Till every one submit himself with pieces of silver.*" The Lord is asked to subdue the enemies of Israel, till they rendered tribute in silver ingots Blessed is that rebuke, which does not break but bend; for subjection to the Lord of hosts is liberty, and tribute to him enriches him that pays it. The taxation of sin is infinitely more exacting than the tribute of religion. The little finger of lust is heavier than the loins of the law. Pieces of silver given to God are replaced with pieces of gold. "*Scatter thou the people that delight in war.*" So that, notwithstanding the strong expression of verse 23, God's

people were peacemen, and only desired the crushing of oppressive nations, that war might not occur again. Let the battles of peace be as fierce as they will; heap coals of fire on the heads of enemies, and slay their enmity thereby. That "they who take the sword should perish by the sword," is a just regulation for the establishment of quiet in the earth. What peace can there be, while blood-thirsty tyrants and their myrmidons are so many? Devoutly may we offer this prayer, and, with equal devotion, we may bless God that it is sure to be answered, for "he breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder, he burneth the chariot in the fire."

31. "*Princes shall come out of Egypt.*" Old foes shall be new friends. Solomon shall find a spouse in Pharaoh's house. Christ shall gather a people from the realms of sin. Great sinners shall yield themselves to the sceptre of grace, and great men shall become good men, by coming to God. "*Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.*" Cush shall hasten to present peace offerings. Sheba's queen shall come from the far south. Candace's chamberlain shall ask of Him who was led as a lamb to the slaughter. Abyssinia shall yet be converted, and Africa become the willing seeker after grace, eagerly desiring and embracing the Christ of God. Poor Ethiopia, thy hands have been long manacled and hardened by cruel toil, but millions of thy sons have in their bondage found the liberty with which Christ made men free; and so thy cross, like the cross of Simon of Cyrene, has been Christ's cross, and God has been thy salvation. Hasten, O Lord, this day, when both the civilization and the barbarism of the earth shall adore thee, Egypt and Ethiopia blending with glad accord in thy worship! Here is the confidence of thy saints, even thy promise; hasten it in thine own time, good Lord.

32 Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah:

33 To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, *which were* of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, *and that* a mighty voice.

34 Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency *is* over Israel, and his strength *is* in the clouds.

35 O God, *thou art* terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel *is* he that giveth strength and power unto *his* people. Blessed *be* God.

32. "*Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth.*" Glorious shall that song be in which whole empires join. Happy are men that God is one who is consistently the object of joyous worship, for not such are the demons of the heathen. So sweet a thing is song that it ought to be all the Lord's; a secular concert seems almost a sacrilege, a licentious song is treason. "*O sing praises unto the Lord.*" Again and again is God to be magnified; we have too much sinning against God, but cannot have too much singing to God. "*Selah.*" Well may we rest now that our contemplations have reached the millenial glory. What heart will refuse to be lifted up by such a prospect!

33. "*To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old.*" Before, he was described in his earthly manifestations, as marching through the desert; now, in his celestial glory, as riding in the heavens of the primeval ages. Long ere this heaven and earth were made, the loftier abodes of the Deity stood fast; before men or angels were created, the splendours of the Great King were as great as now, and his triumphs as glorious. Our knowledge reaches but to a small fragment of the life of God, whose "goings forth were of old, even from everlasting." Well might the Jewish church hymn the eternal God, and well may we join therewith the adoration of the Great Firstborn:—

"Ere sin was born, or Satan fell,
He led the host of morning stars.
Thy generation who can tell?
Or count the number of thy years?"

"*Lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice.*" Was there a thunder-clap just then heard in heaven? Or, did the poet's mind flash backward to the time when from the heaven of heavens the voice of Jehovah broke the long silence and said, "Light be," and light was. To this hour, the voice of God is power. This gospel which utters and reveals his word, is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Our voices are fitly called to praise him whose voice spoke us into being, and gives us the effectual grace which secures our well-being.

34. "*Ascribe ye strength unto God.*" When even his voice rends the rocks and uproots the cedars, what cannot his hand do? His finger shakes the earth; who can conceive the power of his arm? Let us never by our doubts or our daring defiances appear to deny power unto God; on the contrary, by yielding to him and trusting in him, let our hearts acknowledge his might. When we are reconciled to God, his omnipotence is an attribute of which we sing with delight. "*His excellency is over Israel.*" The favoured nation is protected by his majesty; his greatness is to them goodness, his glory is their defence. "*And his strength is in the clouds.*" He does not confine his power to the sons of men, but makes it like a canopy to cover the skies. Rain, snow, hail, and tempest are his artillery; he rules all nature with awe-inspiring majesty. Nothing is so high as to be above him, or too low to be beneath him; praise him, then, in the highest.

35. "*O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places.*" Thou inspirest awe and fear. Thy saints obey with fear and trembling, and thine enemies flee in dismay. From thy threefold courts, and especially from the holy of holies, thy majesty flashes forth and makes the sons of men prostrate themselves in awe "*The God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people.*" In this thou, who art Israel's God by covenant, art terrible to thy foes by making thy people strong, so that one shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight. All the power of Israel's warriors is derived from the Lord, the fountain of all might. He is strong, and makes strong: blessed are they who draw from his resources, they shall renew their strength. While the self-sufficient faint, the All-sufficient shall sustain the feeblest believer "*Blessed be God.*" A short but sweet conclusion. Let our souls say Amen to it and yet, again, Amen.

NEW TRANSLATION.

In order that our readers may see the Psalm at a glance in a good translation, we subjoin the version of FRANZ DELITZSCH, *recommending our ministerial brethren to procure the volumes of his valuable Commentary on the Psalms, issued by the* Messrs. CLARK, of Edinburgh.

PSALM LXVIII.

HYMN OF WAR AND VICTORY IN THE STYLE OF DEBORAH.

2 LET Elonim arise, let His enemies be scattered,
And let those who hate Him flee before His face.

3 As smoke is driven away, do Thou drive them away;
As wax melteth before the fire,
Let the wicked perish before Elohim.

4 And let the righteous rejoice, let them exult before Elohim,
And let them be glad with joy.
5 Sing unto Elohim, harp His name,
Pave a highway for Him who rideth along through the steppes;
Jah is his name, and exult ye before Him.

6 A Father of the fatherless and an Advocate of the widows
Is Elohim in his Holy habitation.
7 Elohim maketh a household for the solitary,
He leadeth forth prisoners into prosperity;
Yet the rebellious abide in a land of drought.

8 Elohim, when Thou wentest forth before Thy people,
When Thou didst march along in the wilderness—(*Sela.*)
9 The earth shook,
The heavens also dropped before Elohim,
Yon Sinai before Elohim, the God of Israel.

10 With plentiful rain didst Thou, Elohim, water Thine inheritance,
And when it was parched, THOU hast confirmed it.
11 Thy creatures have settled down therein,
Thou didst provide with Thy goodness for the poor, Elohim.

12 The Lord will sound forth the mandate;
Of the women who herald victory there is a great army.
13 The kings of hosts shall flee, shall flee,
And she that tarrieth at home shall divide the spoil.

14 If ye encamp among the sheep-folds,
The dove's wings are covered with silver
And her feathers with glistening gold.
15 When the Almighty scattereth kings therein,
It becometh snow-white upon Zalmon.

16 A mountain of Elohim is the mountain of Bashan,
A mountain full of peaks is the mountain of Bashan.
17 Why look ye enviously, ye many-peaked mountains,
Upon the mountain which Elohim hath chosen, to dwell thereon?
Yea, Jahve will dwell [there] for ever.

18 The war-chariots of Elohim are myriads, a thousand thousands,
The Lord is among them, it is a Sinai in holiness.
19 Thou hast ascended up to the height, Thou hast led captives captive,
Thou hast received gifts among men,
Even from the rebellious, that Jah Elohim might dwell [there].

20 Blessed be the Lord:
Day by day doth He bear our burden,
He, God, is our salvation. (*Sela.*)
21 He, God, is to us a God for deeds of deliverance,
And Jahve the Lord hath ways of escape for death.

22 Yea, Elohim will smite the head of His enemies,
The hairy scalp of him who stalketh along in his trespasses.
23 The Lord hath said: Out of Bashan will I bring back,
I will bring back out of the depths of the sea,
24 That thou mayest bathe thy foot in blood,
That the tongue of thy dogs may have its share of the enemy.

25 They behold Thy splendid procession, Elohim,
The splendid procession of my God, my King in holiness.
26 Before went the singers, behind the players on stringed instruments,
In the midst of damsels striking timbrels.
27 In the choirs of the congregation bless ye Elohim,
The Lord, ye who are out of the fountain of Israel.
28 There is Benjamin the youngest, their ruler;
The princes of Judah—their motley band,
The princes of Zebulun, the princes of Naphtali,

29 Thy God hath commanded thy supreme power—
Uphold in power, Elohim, what Thou hast wrought for us!—
30 From Thy temple above Jerusalem
Let kings present offerings into Thee.
31 Threaten the wild beast of the reed, the troops of bulls with the calves of the people,
That they may prostrate themselves with ingots of silver!—
He hath scattered the peoples that delight in wars.
32 Magnates come out of Egypt,
Cush—quickly do his hands stretch out unto Elohim

33 Ye kingdoms of the earth, sing unto Elohim,
Praising the Lord with stringed instruments—(*Sela.*)
34 To Him who rideth in the heaven of heavens of the primeval time—
Lo, He made Himself heard with His voice, a mighty voice.
35 Ascribe ye might unto Elohim!

Over Israel is His majesty,
And His omnipotence in the heights of the heavens.
36 Terrible is Elohim out of thy sanctuaries;
"The God of Israel giveth might and abundant strength to the people!"
Blessed be Elohim!

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—In this Psalm we have especial reason to condemn or to admire the timidity, or the caution and delicacy of our translators, whichever it may be considered, for the manner in which they have rendered the names of the Almighty. They almost universally translate them "God" or "Lord;" whereas, it has been observed that, almost all the remarkable titles of the Deity are employed in describing and praising the person addressed here. He is called "Elohim" in verse 2; "Adonai," verse 12; "Shaddai," verse 15; "Jehovah," verse 17; "Jah," verse 19; and "Al," verse 20. The Hebrew names of God have, each of them, a distinct and peculiar meaning. No one word will suffice for them all. The vague use of the terms "God" and "Lord" in our translation can never convey to the reader's mind the important ideas which the original expressions, if properly translated, would bear, and we have lost a strong additional confirmation of the deity of Messiah, by abandoning the testimony which the ascription to him of God's peculiar titles would give to this great truth.—*R. H. Ryland.*

Whole Psalm.—As lxvii. opened with a reference to the form of blessing (Numb. vi. 24-26), so this with a reference to the prayer used when the cloud-pillar summoned the camp to commence a march *There* the presence (*panim*) of God shed saving light on his people; here his enemies flee from it (*mippanayv*, ver. 1). . . . In the Jewish ritual the Psalm is used at Pentecost, the Anniversary of the Giving of the Law, and the Feast of Finished Harvest. . . . The remarkable character of the Psalm is indicated by the fact that there are no fewer than thirteen words in it which are not found elsewhere. The Pentecostal Gift of Tongues seems needed for its full exposition.—*William Kay.*

Whole Psalm.—By many critics esteemed the loftiest effusion of David's lyrical muse.—*William Binnie.*

Whole Psalm.—To judge from the antiquity of its language, the concise description, the thoroughly fresh, forcible, and occasional artlessly ironical expression of its poetry, we consider this poem as one of the most ancient monuments of Hebrew poetry.—*Boettcher.*

Whole Psalm.—It must be confessed that in this Psalm there are as many precipices, and as many labyrinths, as there are verses, or even words. It has not inappropriately been designated the cross of critics, the reproach of interpreters.—*Simon de Muis.*

Whole Psalm.—The beginning of this Psalm clearly intimates that the inspired psalmist had light given him to see the march of Israel through the wilderness, the ark of the covenant moving before the people to find a resting place. The psalmist is filled with praise, when he is enabled to see that God revealed his Fatherly love in the whole of that movement—that his eye was upon the fatherless, the widow, the solitary, and afflicted; but David is also carried by the Spirit to the Mount of Olives, where he sees the ascending Lord; he sees the triumphal chariots, with an innumerable company of angels, and then beholds the Lord welcomed in glory as the mighty Conqueror; and not only so, but as having received or purchased gifts for men, even the rebellious (ver. 18), "that the Lord God might dwell among them," or *within them.* "Wherefore," the command of our Father is, "come out from among them, and be ye separate," etc. (2 Cor. vi. 17-18). The doxology of God's people is, "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits." Our blessed Master attends day by day to all our wants, and causes his love to flow to us, because he is God our Salvation—Selah. What comfort ought this to afford under every condition! for the Lord Jesus goes before us through the desert. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. The widow, the fatherless, the desolate, are all the objects of his care and love. He has gone before us to prepare our heavenly rest; the work is finished. He now

comes, day by day, to load us with blessings, and at the last will carry us safely through death into life and glory. To the Lord our Saviour belong the issues from death; then, "Death, where is thy sting?" etc.—*Ridley H. Herschell, in "Strength in Weakness. Meditations on some of the Psalms in time of Trial."* 1860.

Verse 1.—"*Let God arise*," etc. The moving ark* is a type of Jesus going forth to cast down rebel foes. It is high joy to trace the Antitype's victorious march. How mightily the Lord advanced! The strength of God was in his arm. His sword was Deity. His darts were barbed with all Jehovah's might. "He had on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords." Rev. xix. 16. His foes, indeed, strove mightily. It was no easy work to rescue souls from Satan's grasp, or to lay low the prison-house of darkness. The enemy rushed on, clad in his fiercest armour, wild in his keenest rage, wily in his deadliest crafts. He plied his every temptation, as a terrific battery. But the true Ark never quailed. The adversary licked the dust. Malignant passions maddened in opposing breasts. The kings stood up; rulers took counsel; all plots were laid; the ignominious death was planned and executed. But still the Ark moved on. The cross gave aid, not injury. The grave could not detain. Death could not vanquish. The gates of hell fly open. The mighty conqueror appears. And, as in Canaan, the ark ascended Zion's hill amid triumphant shouts, so Jesus mounts on high. The heaven of heavens receives him. The Father welcomes the all-conquering Saviour. Angelic hosts adore the glorious God-man. The Rising Prayer has full accomplishment, "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee."

And now, from glory's throne, he cheers his humble followers in their desert march. Their toils, their conflicts, and their fears are many. They ofttimes seem as a poor worm beneath the crushing feet. But they survive, they prosper, they lift up the head. As of old the ark was victory, so Jesus is victory now. Yes, every child of faith shall surely set a conquering foot upon the host of foes. Hear this, ye mad opposers, and desist. Where are the nations who resisted Israel? Where are the Pharaohs, the beleaguered kings, the Herods, the chief-priests, the Pilates? Share not their malice, lest you share their end. Read in this word your near destruction, "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee."

And, as the Rising Prayer has never failed, so, too, the Resting Prayer now teems with life. "Return, O Lord." Jesus is ready to fly back. Israel's many thousands wait, but wait not in vain. "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry," Heb. x. 37. O joyful day, triumphant sight! What ecstacy, what shouts, what glory! Salvation's Lord returns. Welcome, welcome to him!—*Henry Law, in "'Christ is All.' The Gospel of the Old Testament."* 1858.

Verse 1.—"*Arise*." The mercifulness of God is seen in his patience toward the wicked, implied in the word "*arise*," for he seemeth, as it were, to *sleep* (Psalm xliv. 23), and not to mark what is done amiss. The Lord is patient, and would have none to perish, but would have all men to come to repentance. He was longer in destroying one city (*Jericho*, Joshua vi. 4), than in building the whole world; slow to wrath, and ready to forgive, desiring not the death of a sinner, but rather he should amend. He doth not arise to particular punishments, much less to the general judgment, but after long suffering and great goodness. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I," quoth our Lord, "have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Matt. xxiii. 37.—*John Boys*.

Verse 1.—"*Let his enemies be scattered*." You may, if you please, take the words either as a prayer, or as a *prophecy*: *as a prayer* that they *may*; or as a

* See Numbers x. 35, 36.

prophecy, that they *shall be scattered.* Or, you may read it, *Surgente Domino, As soon as the Lord shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered,* and so make it a theological axiom: and so it is a proposition *æternæ veritatis,* everlastingly true, true in the first age of the world, and true in the last age of the world, and will be true to the world's end. We may make it our prayer, that they may be destroyed; and we may prophesy, that they shall be destroyed. *Summa votorum est, non ex incerto poscentis, sed ex cognitione scientiâque sperantis,* saith Hilary. It is a prayer not proceeding from a doubting and wavering heart, as if God did at sometimes deliver his church, and at others fail and leave her to the will of her enemies; but grounded upon certain knowledge and infallible assurance that he will "*arise, and not keep silence,*" and avenge himself of his enemy. For there is a kind of presage and prophecy in prayer: if we pray as we should, he hath promised to grant our request; which is a fairer assurance than any prophet can give us. "*Let God arise,*" and *God will arise,* is but the difference of a tense, and the Hebrews commonly use the one for the other. . . . .

In this prayer or prophecy, or conclusion, you may, as in a glass, behold the providence of God over his people, and the destiny and fatal destruction of wicked men. Or, you may conceive God sitting in heaven, and looking down upon the children of men, and laughing to scorn all the designs of his enemies; his *exsurgat,* his rising, as a tempest to scatter them, and as a fire to melt them. And these two, *exsurgat* and *dissipabuntur,* the rising of God and the destruction of his enemies, divide the text, and present before our eyes two parties or sides, as it were, in main opposition. Now, though the *exsurgat* be before the *dissipabuntur,* God's rising before the scattering, yet there must be some persons to rouse God up and awake him before he will arise to destroy. We will, therefore, as the very order of nature required, consider first the persons which are noted out unto us by three several appellations, as by so many marks and brands in their forehead. They are, 1. *Enemies;* 2. *Haters of God;* 3. *Wicked men.* But God, *rising* in this manner, is more especially against the fact than the person, and against the person only for the fact. We must, therefore, search and inquire after that; and we find it wrapt up and secretly lurking in the *dissipabuntur,* in their punishment; for scattering supposeth a gathering together, as corruption doth generation. That, then, which moved God to rise is this: his *enemies,* they that *hated him, the wicked,* were gathered together, and consulted against God and his church, as we see it this day; and, seeing it, are here met together to fall down before God in all humility, that he may arise and scatter them. This is *nunc opportunitatis,* the very time and appointed time *for* God to *arise.* In which phrase is implied a kind of pause and deliberation, as if God were not always up, and ready to execute judgment. And, hereby, he manifesteth—1. His patience to the wicked: he is not always up, as it were, to destroy his enemies; 2. His justice, which cometh at length, though it come not so soon as men in misery expect; 3. His mercy to his children: though for a while he seem to sleep, and not to hearken to the voice of their complaints, yet, at last, he rises up and helps them. Lastly, we shall take notice of the effect, or end, of this rising; and that is the destruction of his enemies, here drawn out to our view, in four several expressions, as in so many colours:—1. *Dissipabuntur, they shall be scattered;* 2. *Fugient, they shall fly;* 3. *Deficient, they shall vanish like smoke;* 4. *Liquefient, they shall be melted as wax;* which all meet and are concentred in *peribunt, they shall perish at the presence of God.—Anthony Farindon.*

Verses 1—3.—Whether the Jewish Church fully comprehended the meaning of the predictions or not, it is absolutely certain that her members were taught, in more places than one, earnestly to pray for Christ's second advent; and to one of these prayers I would now direct your attention, considering, I. *The Prayer of the Jewish Church for the Second Advent of Christ.* II. *The duty of the Christian Church to join in it.* The psalmist, moved by the Spirit of God, adopts the words used by Moses in the wilderness, when the ark, in which God

dwelt between the cherubim, set forward; for we read in the 10th of Numbers, "It came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee. And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel." But the wanderings of Israel were now over, and the ark of the Lord had found a place of rest. The people of God were in the land promised to their fathers; their enemies were subdued; and the ark went forth no more with the armies of Israel. It is not, therefore, the removal of the ark to which the prophet alludes in his prayer. The context of the Psalm, and the expressions used, carry us on far beyond the days of David, and refer us to times still future. David prays for the return of him of whom the ark was a type, and whose glorious advent he beheld by the spirit of prophecy. The words of the text contain a prayer for the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. Never has this prayer been yet answered in its full extent. The Lord has oft interfered in behalf of his people, or to rouse the wicked to repentance; but these interpositions were temporary, and the world was left again to the government of his providence. God has often given tokens sufficient to show the world what he will do when the day of his wrath is come. . . . But yet the world and the church abound with wickedness, and mourn because of sin. They that hate the Lord flee not before him, but are still suffered to open their mouths in blasphemy; nor have the wicked perished in the presence of God. . . . This rising up, for which the psalmist prays, is connected with the restoration of Israel, the establishment of universal peace, and the conversion of all nations: ver. 22, 29, 30, 31. II. As members of the Christian Church, we continually profess our faith in the second coming of Christ; and, it may be, that we sometimes meditate upon his glorious appearance; but have we, like David, adopted it as one of the subjects of our addresses at the throne of grace? . . . . Has our faith ever enabled us to take up the language of the text, and say, "*Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him*"? This leads me, in the second place, to point out our duty to join in the psalmist's petitions. If it were a prayer suited only to the individual case of David, no obligation could rest upon us to unite in it; but it is a prayer for the universal church, for every one who loves the Saviour, and desires to see "the King in his beauty," for every one who mourns over the state of the world and the church. It is a prayer frequently repeated in Holy Scripture of the Old Testament taught by our Lord, now offered up by saints in the presence of God, and with which the Scriptures of the New Testament conclude. . . . .

It is remarkable that only one prayer of the departed saints has been made known to us, and that this one should be a prayer to the same effect. In the 5th Chapter of the Revelation, the Lord is pleased to give us a view of the state of those who have died as martyrs. St. John says, "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Though removed from this scene of woe and misery, safe from all the attempts of the wicked, and in the enjoyment of God's presence, their happiness is not yet complete, and they still find subject matter for prayer and supplication. They still long for that day when the Lord shall arise to judgment, and put an end to the triumph of the wicked. With this prayer also the New Testament concludes. . . . . We cannot, therefore, doubt, but that it is our duty to join in a prayer which the Holy Ghost has dictated, which our Lord has appointed, which the saints in heaven use, and which the beloved disciple offered up. The nature of the prayer presents another argument to enforce this duty. We are bound to pray for those things which promote the honour of Christ, and the eternal happiness of his people. But never shall the honour of Christ be complete, nor his people happy, nor the righteous be glad and rejoice exceedingly, until God arise and his enemies be

scattered.—*Alexander M'Caul, D.D., in "Plain Sermons on Subjects Practical and Prophetic."* 1840.

Verse 2.—"*As smoke is driven away,*" etc. The psalmist adds a striking figure to illustrate how easily God can overthrow the machinations of our enemies, comparing them to *smoke which vanishes away when blown upon by the wind*, or *wax which melts before the fire.* We consider it utterly incredible that such a formidable array of opposition should be made to disappear in a moment. But the Spirit takes this method of chiding the fearfulness of our carnal minds, and teaching us that there is no such strength in our enemies as we suppose—that we allow the smoke of them to blind our eyes, and the solid mass of resistance which they present to deceive us into a forgetfulness of the truth, that the mountains themselves flow down at the presence of the Lord.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 2.—"*As smoke is driven away,*" etc. "Their end was bitter as the smoke," said an aged teacher. What meanest thou, O Master? asked his young disciple. "I was thinking of the end of the unrighteous," replied the old man, "and of how too often I, like the psalmist, have been envious when they were in prosperity. Their lives have seemed so bright and glowing that I have thought they resembled the blaze of a cheerful fire on a winter's night. But, as I have watched them, they have suddenly vanished like the flame that fades into black and bitter smoke; and I have ceased to envy them. Trust not, O my scholar, only to that which appears brilliant; but watch also for its ending, lest thou be deceived."—*Hubert Bower, in "Parables and Similitudes of the Christian Life."* 1871.

Verse 3.—"*But let the righteous be glad.*" The wicked flee from the presence of God, since it inspires them with terror; the righteous on the other hand rejoice in it, because nothing delights them more than to think that God is near them.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 4.—"*Extol him that rideth upon the heavens.*" Or, as Symmachus, Jerome, Bishop Lowth, Merrick, and others render, "Prepare the way for him who rideth through the deserts: עֲרָבוֹת *âravoth;* i.e., who rode through the wilderness on the cherubim; alluding to the passage of the ark.—"*Comprehensive Bible.*"

Verse 4.—"*Rideth.*" Said, perhaps, with allusion to the cherubim on which Jehovah was borne (xviii. 10), God himself being the Leader and Captain of his people, riding as it were at their head as an earthly captain might lead his army, riding on a war-horse.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 4.—"*Upon the heavens.*" The ancient versions in general render the word בָּעֲרָבוֹת *super occasus*, or *occasum.* The *desert* or *solitude* is the proper and general meaning of it, and there is no authority to render it by *the heavens*, but that of the Rabbins, which, indeed, is little or none; and of the Chaldee paraphrase which gives it עַל כּוּרְסֵיהּ יְקָרֵיהּ בַּעֲרָבוֹת *super thronam gloriæ ejus in nono cœlo:* who sits upon the throne of his glory in the ninth heaven. The psalmist here alludes, as I apprehend, to the passage of the Israelites through the deserts in their way to the promised land, and describes it in many of the principal circumstances of it in the following verses; and God is said to *ride*, or, *be carried through the deserts*, as the ark of his presence was carried through them, and accompanied the Israelites in all their various stages during their continuance and pilgrimage in them.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 4.—God always goes at the head of his people through the deserts of suffering and need; in the deserts of trouble they find in him a true leader.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 4.—"*His name* JAH." JAH, as the concentration of Jehovah, is the more emphatic term (*Stier.*) It occurs for the first time in Ex. xv. 2.—*Frederic Fysh, in "A Lyrical Literal Version of the Psalms."* 1850.

Verse 5.—"*A father of the fatherless.*" In a spiritual sense, the *orphans*, whose father God is, says Hilary, are those who have renounced their father the Devil, and those to whom Christ, at his departure, sent another *Comforter*, according to his promise—"I will not leave you orphans."—*Lorinus.*

Verse 5.—Does not James i. 27. refer to this verse, for we have "the *fatherless*," "the *widow*," and then the "*holiness*," of the God we serve?—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 5.—"*God in his holy habitation.*" Albeit the Lord be infinite and uncomprehended by any place, yet hath he appointed a trysting-place where his people shall find him by his own ordinance, to wit, the assembly of his saints, his holy temple shadowing forth Christ to be incarnate, who now is in heaven, now is incarnate, and sitting at the right hand of God, in whom dwells the Godhead; here, here is God to be found.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 6.—"*God setteth the solitary in families.*" It may be interpreted of the fruitfulness and increase of the church with converts, under the gospel dispensation, even from among the Gentiles, who were before solitary, or were alone, without God and Christ, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; but, being called and converted by the ministry of the word, were brought into and placed in gospel churches, or families. . . . . Gospel churches, like families, have a master over them, who is Christ the Son and firstborn, of whom they are named; where are saints of various ages, sizes, and standing; some fathers, some young men, and some children; where are provisions suitable for them, and stewards to give them their portion of meat in due season, who are the ministers of the word; and laws and rules, by which they are directed and regulated, and everything is kept in good decorum.—*John Gill.*

Verse 8.—"*The God of Israel.*" Sinai was the seat not only of God, but of the *covenant God* of the people of Israel; from which the law was proclaimed, and the covenant struck between God and his people.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 9.—The "*Thou*" in the Hebrew is emphatic: "Thine inheritance, even when it was wearied (*i.e.*, worn out) *thou* didst confirm;" or, "*fortify* it." Thou who alone couldst strengthen one worn out, didst so for thy people.—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 9.—"*A liberal rain.*" The words translated *a liberal rain*, read literally in the Hebrew *a rain of freenesses;* and I agree with interpreters in thinking that he alludes to the blessing as having come in the exercise of free favour, and to God, as having of his own unprompted goodness provided for all the wants of his people. Some read, *a desirable rain;* others, *a rain flowing without violence*, or *gentle;* but neither of these renderings seems eligible. Others read, *a copious* or *plentiful rain;* but I have already stated what appears to me to be the preferable sense.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 9.—"*A gracious rain;*" that is, of manna.—*Edmund Law* (1703—1787), *quoted by Richard Warner in loc.* 1828.

Verse 9.—"*Rain.*" One fountain, says Cyril, waters thy paradise, and the rain that falls upon all the world is the same; it is white in the bloom of the hawthorn, red in the rose, purple in the hyacinth, and diverse in diverse kinds, and all in all; yet it itself is the same and of the same kind. . . . . So also the Holy Spirit, though he is one and the same and not divisible, yet to every one he divideth grace according as he wills.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 9.—"*A plentiful rain.*" Thy love has been as a shower! The returns, but a dew-drop, and that dew-drop stained with sin.—*James Harrington Evans.* 1785—1849.

Verse 10.—"*Thy congregation.*" The words are choice and expressive. Addressing God, (the poet) intentionally and emphatically calls the people of Israel חֲיָתֶךָ *thy combined congregation*, in contrast to former divisions and various

dissensions, to signify, that the people was now welded together, formed into one society, and united at the same time, that it was well ordered, and constituted as the *society of God*, wherein his laws flourished and were wont to be observed.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 10.—"*Thy congregation.*" Or, *Thy living creatures*, חַיָּתֶךָ, τὰ ζῶά σου, LXX. *animalia*, Vulgate; probably a reference to the immense number of quails which were miraculously brought to the camp of the Israelites, and, in a manner, *dwelt around it.—Note in the "Comprehensive Bible."*

Verse 10.—"*Thy congregation.*" Or, *Thy living creatures.* That desolate place, where only wild beasts before could live, was now by those showers of manna (verse 9) enabled to sustain a multitude of other *tamer living creatures*, even of *men* and all their *flocks* and *herds.—Henry Hammond.*

Verse 10 (*first clause*).—Rather:—"As for thy food (manna and quails), they dwelt in the midst of it.—*Edmund Law.*

Verse 10 (*first clause*).—*As to thy food, they dwelt amidst it.* The ambiguity of the word חַיָּה has occasioned various renderings of this line. Parkhurst considers the radical sense of חַיָּה is "to be vigorous, strong;" hence the noun denotes *force*, a body of men (2 Sam. xxiii. 13); and also that which gives strength, the means of support, or food (Judg. vi. 4 and xvii. 10); and compare Neh. ix. 6. Our translators took the term in the first sense; I take it in the second, because the connection seems to require it, and because חַיִל refers always to a body of men, as soldiers, as actually engaged in some kind of warfare. Hence what is called the *troop* of Philistines (2 Sam. xxiii. 13) is called the *camp* of the Philistines. 1 Chron. xi. 15. And, lastly, because the common version has no antecedent to which בָּהּ, *in it*, or *amidst it*, can refer; but this version has one in the noun *food*. I think there is then a reference not only to the manna, but to the quails, which God brought in abundance around the camp. Exod. xvi. 13; Num. xi. 31. Thus he *prepared in his goodness for the poor.—Benjamin Boothroyd.*

Verse 10.—"*Thou hast prepared in thine own sweetness for the poor, O God.*" *In thine own sweetness*, not in his sweetness. For the needy he is, for he hath been made weak, in order that he may be made perfect: he hath acknowledged himself indigent, that he may be replenished.—*Augustine.*

Verse 11.—"*The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.*" You shall find, when the enemies of the church are destroyed, that God hath many preachers made that do teach his praises. . . . . The words in the original are very significant, and do note two things. First, the word which you read "*company*," in the Hebrew it is "army," "great was the army of preachers." An army of preachers is a great matter; nay, it is a great matter to have seven or eight good preachers in a great army; but to have a whole army of preachers that is glorious. Secondly, it doth note out the heartiness of this preaching army, for the word נֶפֶשׁ, soul, is to be understood as in that place of Ecclesiastes; it is said there, "The words or book of the preacher," which, being in the feminine gender, doth suppose *nephesh*, and as if he should say, as Vatablus hath it: the words or book of him that hath a preaching soul or heart, or the words of a preaching soul or heart. So here where it is said, great is the army of preachers, the word being in the feminine gender, it is as if he should say, great is the army of preaching souls, whose very hearts within them shall preach of the Lord's works. Now, my brethren, it is much to have a preaching army; but if this army shall with heart and soul preach of God's praise, O that is a blessed thing. Yet thus shall it be when the enemies of God shall be destroyed. And, therefore, seeing God will not lose all those sermons of his own praises, in due time the enemies of the church shall be scattered.—*William Bridge, in "The True Soldier's Convoy."* 1640.

Verse 11.—It is owing to the word, the appointment, and power of God, that any persons are induced or enabled to preach the gospel.—*John Newton* (1725—1807), *in "Messiah."*

Verses 11, 12.—This account of Israel's victories is applicable to victories obtained by the exalted Redeemer, when the enemies of man's salvation were vanquished by the resurrection of Christ, and the heathen nations were compelled to own his power; and this great victory was first notified by *women* to the disciples.—*From "A Practical Illustration of the Book of Psalms; by the Author of the Family Commentary on the New Testament."* [Mrs. Thomson.] 1826.

Verses 11, 12.—The Lord did give his word at his ascension, and there were a multitude of them that published it, and by this means kings of armies were put to flight: they conquered by the word: there is not such another way to rout kings and their armies.—*William Strong.* —1654.

Verses 11—14.

> The Lord giveth the word!
> A great company of women announce the glad tidings!
> Kings with their armies flee—they flee!
> And those, who dwell within the house, divide the spoil!
> Although they lie among the hearth-stones,
> They are become like a dove's wings overlaid with silver,
> And like her pinions overlaid with yellow gold.
> When the Almighty scattereth kings,
> They glisten therein, as snow upon Salmon.

Those who dwell within the house—i.e., the women. They are thus described in allusion to their retired habits of life, in eastern countries. *Lie among the hearth-stones—i.e.*, are habitually employed in the lowest domestic offices, and whose ordinary dress, therefore, is mean and soiled. *The hearth-stones*—Hebrew rests (for boilers). *They are become*—by being decked in the spoils of the enemy.—*Glisten as snow*—Hebrew (each woman) *is snowy: therein—i.e.*, in the spoils distributed amongst them.—*French and Skinner's Translation and Notes.*

Verse 12.—"*Kings of armies did flee apace.*" In the Hebrew it is, they fled, they fled; fled is twice. Why so? That is, they did flee very hastily, and they fled most confusedly, they fled all ways; they fled, they fled, noting the greatness of the flight.—*William Bridge.*

Verse 12.—"*The kings of hosts shall flee.*"—The "hosts" are the numerous well-equipped armies which the kings of the heathen lead forth to the battle against the people of God. The unusual expression, "kings of hosts," sounds very much like an ironically disparaging antithesis to the customary "Jahve of Hosts."—*Böttcher, quoted by Delitzsch.*

Verse 12.—"*She that tarried at home.*" That is, all the noncombatants, saith Kimchi. Or, the women also (those *domi portæ*) came forth to pillage. These days of the gospel do abound with many godly matrons and holy virgins. And it is easy to observe that the New Testament affordeth more store of good women than the old.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 12.—"*Divided the spoil,*" not merely (as Hupfeld) "receives her portion of the spoil," but rather "distributes among her daughters and handmaidens, etc., the share of the spoil" which her husband has brought home.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 13.—It would neither be profitable nor possible to give the reader all the conjectures with which learned men have illustrated or darkened this passage. My aim has been to give a selection, not perhaps what may be called a judicious one, but a sort of sample selection, containing specimens of interpretations. Hammond, who is a very high authority, collects what are probably the best suggestions; we, therefore, give the substance of his long note upon this place. Solomon Jarchi and others see in the word the idea of boundaries, ways, and paths which serve as divisions of land, hence the divergence of the Septuagint into the meaning of portions and inheritances. The boundaries were usually heaps of stones, broken bricks, and rubbish, hence another meaning.

But stones, bricks, etc., were often used to support pots in the open-air cookery of the orientals, hence we come to the meaning of "among the *pots*." And, as Job on his dunghill sat among ashes, and scraped himself with a potsherd, we see that sitting among such rubbish was a conspicuous image of the most dejected and squalid condition. In the wings of a dove, Hammond sees an allusion to the golden cherubic wings which covered the ark, whereby God's presence was exhibited to his people, and their prosperity secured. His explanation of the whole is as follows:—"The Israelites that were oppressed, and long lay in a sad and black, destitute, despised condition, were now at length advanced to all prosperity, splendour, and glory (as was remarkable in their coming out from the kilns of Egypt, with the jewels and wealth of the Egyptians, and afterward more illustriously at their enjoying of Canaan). And so, under Christ's kingdom, the heathenish idolaters that were brought to the basest and most despicable condition of any creatures, worshipping wood and stone, etc., and given up to the vilest lusts, and a reprobate mind (Rom. I.), should from that detestable condition be advanced to the service of Christ, and practice of all Christian virtues, charity, meekness, etc., the greatest inward beauties in the world."—*C. H. S.*

Verse 13.—"*Though ye have lien among the pots,*" etc. That is, probably, though ye have laboured and lain down *between the brick-kilns* in Egypt,—a poor, enslaved, and oppressed people, yet ye shall gradually rise to dignity, prosperity, and splendour; as a dove, which has been defiled with dirt, disordered, and dejected, by washing herself in a running stream, and trimming her plumage, gradually recovers the serenity of her disposition, the purity of her colour, and the richness and varied elegance of her appearance.—*W. Greenfield, in* "*Comp. Bible.*"

Verse 13.—"*Though ye have lien among the pots;*" or, *between two rows of stones* (understand hearth-stones), as in camps, and elsewhere also, which even to this day used to be laid and disposed to make fire between them to dress meat by, setting on or hanging over it pots and kettles, etc. Others, *between* or *among dripping-pans*, or *pots*, the sense being all one, and this—though you should be cast or thrust out into the uttermost slavery, or vilest condition (as in Egypt), all besmoked and besmutted, like cooks and scullions, yet shall God through his gracious blessing make you to shine again like a goodly flying dove, which glistereth as if it were of silver and gold.—*Theodore Haak's* "*Translation of the Dutch Annotations, as ordered by the Synod of Dort in* 1618." London. 1657.

Verse 13.—"*Though ye had lain among the folds.*" Though ye had been treated by the Egyptians as a company of *contemptible shepherds*, and were held in abomination by them as such. See Genesis xlvi. 34.—*William Green, in* "*A New Translation of the Psalms, with Notes,*" etc. 1762.

Verse 13 (*first clause*).—German, "*lie a-field,*" *i.e.*, though you thus, in deep peace, lie among the sheepfolds.—*T. C. Barth.*

Verse 13.—"*Will ye lie down among the sheepfolds?*" A sharp remonstrance. Will ye lie at ease, in the quiet of your pastoral life, as the dove with unsoiled plumage in her peaceful nest, while your brethren are in the tumult and dust of the conflict! Compare Judges v. 16, (from which this allusion is taken) and 17. —*Thomas J. Conant.*

Verse 13.—"*Though ye have lien among the pots,*" etc. Here is one Hebrew word in the original which especially renders the Scripture intricate; namely שְׁפָתַיִם, *shephattajim;* which, being a word of divers significations and translations, occasions various interpretations. It is rendered, I. *limits* or *bounds;* II. *lots* or *inheritances;* III. *pots* or *pot-ranges.* 1. Some render it *two limits*, or *two bounds* (the word being of the *dual number*); *viz.*, the *two limits*, bounds, or coasts of the enemies, ready to afflict, vex, and infest them on each hand. Or, two confines of the country where they fortified themselves against their enemies. This sense some later writers embrace: and it's one of the interpretations which Ainsworth gives, though not in the first place. But this version

seems here very unsuitable, for that it quite destroys the elegance and fitness of the opposition between the two metaphors, representing Israel's different conditions, *before* and *under* David's Government. Some render it *two lots*, or *two inheritances*. So the LXX., *ἀνὰ μέσον τῶν κλήρων*; that is, *amidst the lots*, or *between the inheritances; inheritances*, as in Canaan, being anciently set out by *lots*. This Hierom seems to follow, turning it, *Si dormiatis inter medios cleros:* and thus he expounds it: "When thou believest the two Testaments, in both thou shalt find the Holy Ghost. And though there be a beauty, even according to the letter, to know what thou readest, the force of all the comeliness is in the sense. Therefore, the outward ornament of the words is demonstrated by the name of *silver;* but the more secret mysteries are contained in the hidden gifts of *gold*, etc. So that, with him, the *two lots* are the *two Testaments;* the *dove* is the Holy Ghost; her *wings covered with silver*, the *outward letter of the Testaments*, the *feathers of yellow gold*, the *inward, spiritual, and mysterious sense*. But this is rather a witty allegorical allusion, than a judicious and solid exposition. Augustine also expounds the words much to this effect, but altogether as unsatisfactorily. The ancient Fathers are not always the best expositors. 3. But most do render the word *pots* or *pot-ranges*. Thus: "Although ye have lien among the pots (or, *between the pot-ranges;* or, *between the two banks* or *rows—viz.*, of stone to hang pots on in the camp or leaguer), yet shall ye be *as the wings of a dove covered* (or *decked*) *with silver, and her feathers with yellow-greenish gold*." And they observe in the words a double metaphor: (1.) The one of Israel's lying among the pots, as scullions lie among the pots, kettles, or cauldrons in the camp or leaguer in time of war, and so are blacked, soiled, smutted, deformed; denoting Israel's abject, low, mean, sullied, deformed, and despicable condition under afflictions and extreme distresses in time past in Egypt, the wilderness, Canaan, and in the time of the Judges. (2.) The other of Israel's being like *the wings of a dove* (which is of very speedy flight for escape), *of bright silver and beauteous golden colour;* representing their escape and deliverance at last out of all their blacking, smutting, and deforming afflictions, into the contrary, beauteous, prosperous, and happy state under the kingdom of David, especially of Jesus Christ the *true* David. *Blackness* notes extreme affliction, affliction and misery; *doves' wings*, escape; white *silver-colour* and beauteous *golden colour*, prosperity and felicity. Thus the metaphors are elegantly opposed one to another, and very significantly set forth the several conditions of Israel; first, as lying among the pots of deep afflictions in former times, but after as assured of deliverance, of better days, and that they should be as a *silver-winged and golden-feathered dove*, full of beauty, comeliness, prosperity, and felicity. To this effect R. David Kimchi, Pagnin, Calvin, Muis, Foord, Ainsworth, and others expound these words.—*Francis Roberts, in a Sermon entitled "The Checquer-Work of God's Providences, towards His Own People, made up of Blacks and Whites,"* etc. 1657.

Verse 13.—"*Though ye have lien among the pots,*" etc. Miss Whately, in her work, "Ragged Life in Egypt," describing some of the sights witnessed from the flat roofs of the houses in Cairo, among other interesting objects, states:—The roofs are usually in a great state of litter, and were it not that *Hasna*, the seller of *geeleh*, gets a palm-branch, and makes a clearance once in a while, her roof would assuredly give way under the accumulation of rubbish. One thing never seemed cleared away, and that was the heaps of old broken pitchers, sherds, and pots, that in these and similar houses are piled up in some corner; and there is a curious observation in connection with this. A little before sunset, numbers of *pigeons* suddenly emerge from behind the pitchers and other rubbish, where they have been sleeping in the heat of the day, or pecking about to find food. They dart upwards, and career through the air in large circles, their outspread wings catching the bright glow of the sun's slanting rays, so that they really resemble bright "yellow gold;" then, as they wheel round, and are seen *against* the light, they appear as if turned into molten silver, most of them being pure white, or else very light coloured. This may seem fanciful, but the

effect of *light* in these regions is difficult to describe to those who have not seen it; and, evening after evening, we watched the circling flight of the doves, and always observed the same appearance. It was beautiful to see these birds, rising clean and unsoiled, as doves always do, from the dust and dirt in which they had been hidden, and soaring aloft in the sky till nearly out of sight among the bright sunset clouds. Thus a believer, who leaves behind him the corruptions of the world, and is rendered bright by the Sun of Righteousness shining upon his soul, rises higher and higher, nearer and nearer to the light, till, lost to the view of those who stay behind, he has passed into the unknown brightness above!—*Miss Whately, in "Ragged Life in Egypt."*

Verse 13.—"*Silver*" and "*yellow gold.*" The changing colours of the dove's plumage are here described. Mant reads it—

> "Whose wings, a silver light illumes,
> And gleams of verdant gold play o'er her burnished plumes!"

It will illustrate the variety of the translations if we add that of Keble:

> "His plumes inlaid with silver sheen,
> His pinions of the pale pure gold."

Personally, I have had cause to remark the flash of the wing of a pigeon, for, in passing before my study window, that bird has often led me to imagine that some unusual light had flashed across the sky; in every case, a mild and silvery light. As to the varying hues of the plumage of birds, Mr. Gosse, after quoting from Sonnerat's Voyage in New Guinea, says, "In reference to the brilliant metallic hues of the epimachus and other birds, the traveller takes occasion to notice the iridiscent effect which is produced by the different angle at which light falls on the feathers. The emerald green, for instance, will often fling out rays of its two constituent primary colours, at one time being blue-green, at another gold-green, while in certain lights all colour vanishes, and a velvet-black is presented to the eye." This it seems to me is a very natural and complete explanation of the poetic language here employed.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 14.—"*Salmon*" or Zalmon, properly Tsalmon, צַלְמוֹן a woody hill near Shechem (Judges ix. 48.). Whether it is this that's referred to in Psalm lxviii. 14, is disputed. Some interpreters take צַלְמוֹן here in its etymological meaning of darkness, =צֶלֶם; thus Luther renders the clause "so wird es helle wo es dunkel ist," *thus it be bright where it is dark*, and understands it with a Messianic reference. Ewald adopts much the same rendering. The majority, however, retain the name as a proper name, but exhibit great variety in their explanation of the passage. Hengstenberg thinks that the phrase, "it snows on Tsalmon," is equivalent to "there is brightness where there was darkness," the hill, originally dark with wood, is now white with snow. De Dieu supposes a comparison: Tsalmon is white with the bones of the slaughtered kings, as if with snow. Some suppose that there is here a mere note of time: it was winter, the snow was on Tsalmon (Herder); and this Hupfeld adopts, with the explanation that the statement is made derisively, with reference to those who tarried at home, deterred by the winter's snow. He considers the passage (12—14) as a fragment of an ancient song, celebrating some of the early conquests of Israel in Canaan, and deriding those, who, from indolence or fear, shrank from the enterprise. He translates thus:

> "The kings of the armies, flee, flee,
> And the housewife shares the spoil!
> Will ye lie among the shippens?
> Pigeon feathers decked with silver,
> And their wings with yellow gold!
> As the Almighty scattered kings therein,
> It was snowing on Tsalmon."

William Lindsay Alexander, in "A Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature." 1866.

Verse 14.—The verb may be viewed as in the second person—*Thou, O God! didst make it fair and white as Mount Salmon with snow.* The reader may

adopt either construction, for the meaning is the same. It is evident that David insists still upon the figure of the whiteness of silver, which he had previously introduced. The country had, as it were, been blackened or sullied by the hostile confusion into which it was thrown, and he says that it had now recovered its fair appearance, and resembled Salmon, which is well known to have been ordinarily covered with snows. Others think that Salmon is not the name of a place, but an appellative, meaning *a dark shade*. I would retain the commonly received reading. At the same time, I think that there may have been an allusion to the etymology. It comes from the word צלם, *tselem*, signifying *a shade*, and Mount Salmon had been so called on account of its blackness. This makes the comparison more striking; for it intimates that as the snows whitened this black mountain, so the country had resumed its former beauty, and put on an aspect of joy, when God dispelled the darkness which had lain upon it during the oppression of enemies.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 14.—"*It was as white as snow in Salmon.*" That is, this thine inheritance, thy peculiar people, appeared as bright and glorious in the sight of their neighbours, as the snowy head of Salmon glisters by the reflection of the sunbeams.—*Thomas Fenton.*

Verse 14.—"*White as snow in Salmon.*" The expression here used seems to denote, that everything seemed as bright and cheerful to the mind of God's people, as Salmon does to their eyes, when glistening with snow. As snow is much less common, and lies a much shorter time in Judæa than in England, no wonder that it is much more admired; accordingly, the son of Sirach speaks of it with a kind of rapture. "The eye will be astonished at the beauty of its whiteness, and the heart transported at the raining of it." Ecclus. xliii. 18 or 20.—*Samuel Burder.*

Verse 14.—"*Salmon.*" Dean Stanley conjectures that Salmon is another name for Mount Ebal; it was certainly near Shechem (see Judges ix. 48.), but it is almost hopeless to expect to identify it, for Mr. Mills, the industrious author of "Nablus and the modern Samaritans," could not find any one who knew the name of Salmon, neither could he discover any traditions in reference to it, or indeed any allusions to it in Samaritan literature. The word signifies a shade, and may, perhaps, popularly be accepted as identical with the name the "Black Forest."—*C. H. S.*

Verse 15.—"*Hill of Bashan.*" The world's physical greatness must yield to the church's spiritual grandeur. The "hill of God" is here an emblem of the *world-kingdoms*, which (Psalm lxv. 6) are great only by the grace of God. A great hill reminds us of the *creative* power of God. Hence, "the hill of Elohim" (the general name of God as *the Creator*) stands in contrast to *the hill* which (verse 16) "the Lord" (Jehovah) will dwell in for ever. It lay in the north, in the region east of Jordan, or the land of Hermon, the kingdom of Og, the most formidable enemy whom Israel encountered on their march to Canaan. "The hill of Bashan is the high snow-summit of Anti-Lebanon, or Hermon, the extreme limit of Bashan. There was a peculiar propriety, from its position on the boundary between Judæa and the heathen world, in employing it as a symbol of the world's might (verse 22; Psalm xlii. 6; lxxxix. 12)" (*Hengstenberg*). The original name of Hermon was Sion, *i.e.*, *lofty* (Deut. iv. 48); allied in sound to Zion, which suggested the contrast here between *the world-hills* and *the Lord's hill.*—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verses 15, 16—

"A mountain of God Mount Bashan is:
A mountain of peaks Mount Bashan is.
Why are ye piqued, ye peakéd mountains?
At the mountain *which* God desires to dwell in?
Yea, Jehovah will dwell therein for ever."

Frederic Fysh's Version.

Verse 16.—"*Why leap ye?*" As triumphing, and making a show of your

natural advantages over Sion. Or, to insult over it, and compare and equalise yourselves in honour with it; poetical kind of speeches. Others translate it, *Why gaze you, as though you were ravished with admiration?—John Diodati.*

Verse 16.—"*This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in.*" This low, little, barren hill of Zion; and God's election maketh the difference, as it did of Aaron's rod from the rest, and doth still of the church from the rest of the world. The Lamb Christ is on Mount Zion. Rev. xiv. 1.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 17.—"*The chariots of God.*" What are these "chariots of God?" Come, we will not stand to mince the matter, look but round about thee, and thou shalt see those *innumerable* chariots and angels here spoken of; for so many *creatures* as thou seest, so many angels and chariots of God thou seest; they are all his host, they are all his chariots wherein he rides; and, whether you see it or no, "*The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.*" The glory of the Lord fills them all (had we but our eyes open to see it so), and they are all at his command, and there is not one creature but doth his pleasure. Oh brethren! how glorious and blessed a thing it is, that looking round about us to behold and see, that look how many creatures *visible* and *invisible* thou seest or conceivest in thy mind to be, for thy soul now to look on them as so many fiery chariots and horsemen for its defence, protection, and preservation! And, on the other hand, "How fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God," who hath all these chariots and horsemen at his command to execute his will and vengeance on those that neglect, hate, and oppose him.—*John Everard in "Militia Cœlestis, or the Heavenly Host."* 1653.

Verse 17.—

> "About his chariot numberless were pour'd
> Cherub, and seraph, potentates, and thrones,
> And Virtues, winged Spirits, and chariots win
> From the armoury of God, where stand of old
> Myriads."
>
> *John Milton, in "Paradise Lost."*

Verse 17.—"*Twenty thousand;*" rather, *two myriads,* רִבֹּתַיִם singular רִבּוֹ; for רִבּוֹא only here in the dual, the infinite number doubled. "*Thousands of angels,*" lit., *thousands of iteration; i.e.*, with marg., *many thousands* (Bythner, Gesenius, &c.), שְׁנָאָן only here, from שָׁנָה, *to repeat.* The rendering *of angels* was probably suggested by the references to Sinai, next clause (see Deut. xxxiii. 2, where for *saints* read *holy ones*); "*chariots*" (רֶכֶב) being used collectively for those who rode in them, as often elsewhere.—*William de Burgh.*

Verse 18.—"*Thou hast ascended on high,*" etc. Some think it refers to God's goings forth on behalf of his people Israel, leading them forth to victory, taking their enemies captive, and enriching them with the spoils. Suppose it be so, we are warranted to consider it as mainly referring to Christ, for so the apostle has applied it. Ephesians iv. 8.

The apostle not only applies it to Christ, but *proves* it applicable. Thus he reasons (verses 9, 10), "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended," etc. The captivity which he led captive was our spiritual enemies who had led us captive—Satan, death; and, having obtained the victory, he proceeds to divide the spoils. *Gifts to men*—as David made presents. And hence comes our ordinances, ministers, etc. There was a glorious fulfilment immediately after his ascension, in a rich profusion of gifts and graces to his church, like David's presents. Here it is "*received;*" in Ephesians, "*gave.*" He received that he might give; received the spoil that he might distribute it. But, as I wish to appropriate the passage to the work allotted me, the whole of that to which I would at this time call your attention will be contained in two things:—

I. *The great blessings of the Christian ministry.*

1. Ministers are *received for*, and are *given to*, you by Christ. As men, and as sinful men, ministers are as nothing, and wish not to make anything of themselves; but, as the gifts of Christ, it becomes you to make much of them. (1.)

If you *love Christ*, you will make much of your minister, on account of his being *his* gift—a gift designed to supply Christ's absence in a sort. He is gone ("ascended"), but he gives you his servants. By-and-by you hope to be with him, but as yet you are as sheep in the wilderness. He gives you a shepherd. (2.) If you *fear God*, you will be afraid of treating your pastor amiss, seeing he is the gift of Christ. God took it ill of Israel for despising Moses. Numbers xii. 8. He is "*my servant*."

2. Ministers are not only given to, but *received for* you, of God the Father, as a covenant blessing, among the spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. In this view, consider that Christ received nothing at his Father's hand but what cost him dear—cost him his life. Or, if the allusion be to the dividing of the spoils, suppose we say, he received them as a conqueror receives the spoils at the hand of the foe. Your minister was one of those who, like yourselves, were brands consuming in the fire. Christ took him from your enemies and gives him to you. Make much of the gift on this account. "This I received of the Amorite."

3. Consider your unworthiness of such a blessing. You are *men*, mere men, and what is more, *rebellious* men, who had joined with Satan. And must you share the spoils? It is not usual to divide the spoils amongst rebels. . . . Men that put him to death had these gifts given to them; and we should all have done the same. Some of you, it is likely, have been vile and abandoned characters, and yet, etc. . . . .

4. The end of it: "That the Lord God might dwell among them." "But will God, indeed, dwell with men?" God had not dwelt with the world, nor in it, while sin bore the rule; but Christ's mediation was for the bringing it about. "Will God, indeed, dwell with men?" He will; and how? It is by the means of ordinances and ministers. A church of Christ is God's house; and where any one builds a house, it is a token that he means to dwell there. What a blessing to a village, a country, for God to build a house in it. It is by this that we may hope for a blessing upon the means to the conversion of our children and friends, and for the edification of believers.

II. *Point out some corresponding duties as answering to these your privileges.*

1. Constant and diligent attendance at the house of God. If the house of God be God's dwelling, let it be yours, your home. If God gives you a pastor, do you thankfully receive and prize him. He hath not dealt so with every village.

2. Cheerfully contribute to his support. Christ has given you freely, and you ought to give him freely. Consider it is not as a gift, but as a debt, and not as done to him, but to Christ.

3. Follow those things which make for peace, with which the presence and blessing of God are connected.

4. Shun those things that tend to provoke the Lord to withdraw his gifts, and to cease to dwell among you.—*Andrew Fuller's Sketch of a Sermon, addressed to the Church at Moulton, on the Ordination of Mr.* (*since Doctor*) *Carey, August 1st*, 1787.

Verse 18.—But who is he of whom it is written, that "*he ascended up on high?*" I confess that the sixty-eighth Psalm, wherein these words are first written, is literally to be understood, not of any triumph for the slaughter of the host of Sennacherib, which was done in the time of king Hezekias (as the Jews do most fabulously dream), when the very title of this Psalm, that ascribeth it unto David, doth sufficiently confute this vanity; nor yet for any of the victories of David which he obtained against his bordering enemies, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Idumæans, and the Philistines (as some would have it); but of that great and glorious pomp which was then done and showed, when king David with great joy and triumph did bring the *ark* of the covenant into the hill of Sion; and, therefore, these words, "*Thou art gone up on high*," do signify that the ark, which formerly had lain in an *obscure* place, and was transported from one place to another, was now ascended and seated in a most *illustrious and conspicuous* place, even in the kingly palace; and these

words, "*thou hast led captivity captive*," do signify those *enemies* which formerly had spoiled and wasted divers countries; but now, being *vanquished* by king David, were led *captive* in this triumph (for so it was the manner of those times, as Plutarch doth excellently declare in the life of Paulus Æmilius); and the other words, "*thou hast received gifts for men*," do signify those spoils that were freely offered for conditions of peace, and were triumphantly carried about in this pompous show, for the greater solemnity of the same; and then (as the manner was among the chieftains when they triumphed, *Bellica laudatis dona dedisse viris*, to bestow warlike gifts upon worthy men), gifts were bestowed on several men, in several manner, as Sigonius sheweth. Yet I say that, *mystically*, this Psalm is an ἐπινικιον, or a triumphal song, penned by king David upon the foresight of Jesus Christ arising from the dead, and with great joy and triumph *ascending* up into heaven, and thence sending his Holy Spirit unto his apostles and disciples; and, having overcome all his enemies, collecting by the ministry of his preachers, his churches and chosen people together, and so guiding and defending them here in this life, until he doth receive them into eternal g'ory.—*Griffith Williams.* 1636.

Verse 18.—"*Thou hast led captivity captive.*" The expression is emphatical. He has conquered and triumphed over all the powers which held us in captivity, so that captivity itself is taken captive. The spirit and force of it is destroyed; and his people, when released by him, and walking in his ways, have no more to apprehend from those whose captives they were, than a conqueror has to fear from a prisoner in chains. The energy of the phrase is not unlike that of the apostle: "Death is swallowed up in victory."—*John Newton.*

Verse 18.—"*Thou hast led captivity captive*," etc. The ancient prophecy of David is fulfilled here on the foot of mount Olivet. To take "captivity captive," signifies that Christ conquered the allied principalities and powers, the devil, sin, death, and hell; and that he deprived them of the instruments wherewith they enslaved men. He not only silenced the cannon on the spiritual Gibraltar, but he took rock, fortification, and all. He not only silenced the horrible and destructive battlements of the powerful and compactly-united ghostly enemies, but he threw down the towers, razed the castles, and took away the keys of the dungeons. He is the Master henceforth, and for ever. He did, also, at the same time, save his people. Where, O Jesus, is the army of which thou art the Captain? "Here! all the names are written in pearls on the breastplate which I wear as a high-priest." He had no sooner left the grave than he began to distribute his gifts, and did so all along the road on his way to his Father's house; and, especially after he entered the heaven of heavens, did he shower down gifts unto men, as a mighty conqueror loaded with treasures with which to enrich and adorn his followers and people. They were gifts of mercy: gifts to the rebellious; to those who threw down their arms at his feet in penitent submission, "that the Lord God may dwell among them." The apostle shows that a portion of these gifts are gifts of ministry. Accordingly, whenever God condescends to dwell among a people and in a country, he gives that people and country this ministry. He sends them his gospel in the mouths of faithful servants. He establishes there his house; the board and the candlestick; and then, in his Spirit, he dwells there and blesses his heritage.—*Christmas Evans.* 1766—1838.

Verse 18.—The apostle (Eph. iv. 8) does not quote the words of the Psalm literally, but according to the sense. The phrase, "*Thou hast received gifts*," as applied to Christ at his glorification, could only be for the purpose of distribution, and hence the apostle quotes them in this sense, "*He gave gifts to men.*" This Hebrew phrase may be rendered either, "Thou hast received gifts in the human nature," or, "Thou hast received gifts for the sake of man." (see Gen. xviii. 28; 2 Kings xiv. 6.) The apostle uses the words in the sense of the *purpose* for which the gifts were received, and there is no contradiction between the psalmist and the apostle. Thus, the difficulties of this quotation

vanish when we examine them closely, and the Old and New Testaments are in complete harmony. Rosenmüller expounds Ps. xviii., and never mentions the name of Christ; and the neologists in general see no Messiah in the Old Testament. To these, indeed, Eph. iv. 8, if they had any modesty, would present a formidable obstacle. Paul asserts the Psalm belongs to Christ, and they assert he is mistaken, and that he has perverted (De Wette) and destroyed its meaning. They assert that *Lamarom*, "on high," means the heights of Mount Zion, and Paul says it means heaven. Which is right? (see the scriptural usage of the word, Ps. vii. 7; xviii. 16; xciii. 4; cii. 19; Jer. xxv. 30; Is. xxxvii. 23). These passages connect the word with the heavenly mansions, and justify the application of the apostle.—*William Graham, in "Lectures on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians."*

Verse 18.—No sooner is Christ inaugurated in his throne, but he scatters his coin, and give gifts. He gives gifts, or the gift of gifts, the gift of the Holy Ghost. "If thou knewest the gift of God," said Christ to the Samaritan woman (John iv. 10): that gift was the water of life, and that water of life was the Spirit, as John, who knew best his mind, gave the interpretation, "This spake he of the Spirit." John vii. 39. O my soul, consider of this princely gift of Christ! Such a gift was never before, but when God gave his Son. "God so loved the world, that he gave his Son;" and Christ so loved the world, that he gave his Spirit. But, O my soul, consider especially to whom this Spirit was given; the application of the gift is the very soul of thy meditation; "unto us a Son is given," said the prophet (Isai. ix. 6); and "unto us the Holy Ghost is given," saith the apostle (Rom. v. 5); and yet above all consider the reasons of this gift in reference to thyself. Was it not to make thee a temple and receptacle of the Holy Ghost? Stand a while on this! Admire, O my soul, at the condescending, glorious, and unspeakable love of Christ in this! It was infinite love to come down into our nature when he was incarnate; but this is more, to come down into thy heart by his Holy Spirit: he came near to us then, but as if that were not near enough, he comes nearer now, for now he unites himself unto thy person, now he comes and dwells in thy soul by his Holy Spirit.—*Isaac Ambrose.* 1592—1674.

Verse 18.—"*Thou hast received gifts for men.*" The glorious ascending of God from Mount Sinai, after the giving of the law, was a representation of his "ascending up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things," as Eph. iv. 10. And, as God then "led captivity captive" in the destruction of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, who had long held his people in captivity and under cruel bondage; so dealt the Lord Christ now in the destruction and captivity of Satan and all his powers (Col. ii. 15); only, whereas it is said in the Psalm that he "received gifts for men," here (Eph. iv. 8) it is said that "he gave gifts to men," wherein no small mystery is couched; for, although Christ is God, and is so gloriously represented in the Psalm, yet an intimation is given that he should act what is here mentioned in a condition wherein he was capable to receive from another, as he did in this matter. Acts ii. 33. And so the phrase in the original doth more than insinuate: לָקַחְתָּ מַתָּנוֹת בָּאָדָם "Thou hast received gifts in Adam,"—in the man, or human nature. And לָקַח signifies as well to *give* as to *receive*, especially when anything is received to be given. Christ re-received this gift in the human nature to give it unto others. Now, to what end is this glorious theatre, as it were, prepared, and all this preparation made, all men being called to the preparation of it? It was to set out the greatness of the gift he would bestow, and the glory of the work which he would effect; and this was to furnish the church with ministers, and ministers with gifts for the discharge of their office and duty. And it will one day appear that there is more glory, more excellency, in giving one poor minister unto a congregation, by furnishing him with spiritual gifts for the discharge of his duty, than in the pompous instalment of a thousand popes, cardinals, or metropolitans. The worst of men, in the observance of a few outward rites and ceremonies, can do the latter; Christ only can do the former, and that as he is ascended up on high to that purpose.—*John Owen.*

Verse 18.—As the passage which we have now been considering is applied by Paul in a more spiritual sense to Christ (Eph. iv. 8), it may be necessary to show how this agrees with the meaning and scope of the psalmist. It may be laid down as an incontrovertible truth, that David, in reigning over God's ancient people, shadowed forth the beginning of Christ's eternal kingdom. This must appear evident to every one who remembers the promise made to him of a never-failing succession, and which received its verification in the person of Christ. As God illustrated his power in David, by exalting him with the view of delivering his people, so has he magnified his name in his only begotten Son. But let us consider more particularly how the parallel holds. Christ, before he was exalted, emptied himself of his glory, having not merely assumed the form of a servant, but humbled himself to the death of the cross. To show how exactly the figure was fulfilled, Paul notices, that what David had foretold was accomplished in the person of Christ, by his being cast down to the lowest parts of the earth in the reproach and ignominy to which he was subjected, before he ascended to the right hand of his Father. Ps. xxii. 7. That in thinking upon the ascension, we might not confine our views to the body of Christ, our attention is called to the result and fruit of it, in his subjecting heaven and earth to his government. Those who were formerly his inveterate enemies he compelled to submission and made tributary; this being the effect of the word of the Gospel, to lead men to renounce their pride and their obstinacy, to bring down every high thought which exalteth itself, and reduce the senses and the affections of men to obedience unto Christ. As to the devils and reprobate men who are instigated to rebellion and revolt by obstinate malice, he holds them bound by secret control, and prevents them from executing intended destruction. So far the parallel is complete. Nor, when Paul speaks of Christ having *given gifts to men*, is there any real inconsistency with what is here stated, although he has altered the words, having followed the Greek version in accommodation to the unlearned reader. It was not himself that God enriched with the spoils of the enemy, but his people; and neither did Christ seek, or need to seek, his advancement, but made his enemies tributary, that he might adorn his Church with the spoil. From the close union subsisting between the head and members, to say that God manifest in the flesh received gifts from the captives, is one and the same thing with saying that he distributed them to his Church. What is said in the close of the verse is no less applicable to Christ: that he obtained his victories that as God he might dwell among us. Although he departed, it was not that he might remove to a distance from us, but, as Paul says, "that he might fill all things." Eph. iv. 10. By his ascension to heaven, the glory of his divinity has been only more illustriously displayed; and, though no longer present with us in the flesh, our souls receive spiritual nourishment from his body and blood, and we find, notwithstanding distance of place, that his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 18.—"*Thou hast received gifts for men.*" Heb. בָּאָדָם, *in man*; "*in human nature*," says Dr. Adam Clarke, "and God, manifest in human flesh, dwells among mortals." "The gifts which Jesus Christ distributes *to man* he has received *in man*, in and by virtue of his *incarnation*, and it is in consequence of his being made man that it may be said, 'the Lord God dwells among them;' for Jesus was called *Immanuel*, 'God with us,' in consequence of his incarnation."—*Ed. Note to Calvin in loc.*

Verse 18.—"*Yea, for the rebellious also.*" I feared, also, that this was the mark that the Lord did set on Cain, even continual fear and trembling under the heavy load of guilt that he had charged upon him for the blood of his brother Abel. Thus did I wind and twine and shrink under the burden that was upon me, which burden also did so oppress me, that I could neither stand, nor go, nor lie, either at rest or quiet. Yet that saying would sometimes come to my mind, He hath received gifts for the rebellious. Psalm lxviii. 18. "The rebellious," thought I; why, surely, they are such as once were under subjec-

tion to their prince, even those who, after they have sworn subjection to his government, have taken up arms against him; and this, thought I, is my very condition; once I loved him, feared him, served him; but now I am a rebel; I have sold him. I have said, let him go if he will; but yet he has gifts for rebels, and then why not for me?—*John Bunyan, in "Grace Abounding."*

Verse 18 (*last clause*).—Thou didst not regard their former disobedience, but, even although seeing them contradicting, thou didst continue to do them good, until thou madest them *thine own abode* (*οἰκητήριον*).—*Theodoret.*

Verse 18 (*last clause*).—The Chaldee has, "Upon the rebellious, who become proselytes and return by repentance, the schechinah of the glory of the Lord God dwelleth."

Verse 19.—"*Blessed be the Lord*," etc. Methinks the sweet singer of Israel seems to raise his note to the emulation of the choir of heaven in the melody of their *Alleiujahs;* yea, let me say, now that he sings above in that blessed consort of glorious spirits, his ditty cannot be better than this that he sang here upon earth, and wherein we are about to bear our parts at this time. Prepare, I beseech you, both your ears for David's song, and your hearts and tongues for your own. And first, in this angelical strain your thoughts cannot but observe the descant and the ground. The descant of gratulation, "*Blessed be the Lord*," wherein is both applause and excitation; an applause given to God's goodness, and an excitation of others to give that applause. The ground is a threefold respect. Of what God is in himself, *God and Lord;* of what God is and doth to us, "*which loadeth us daily with benefits;*" of what he is both in himself and to us, "*the God of our salvation;*" which last (like to some rich stone) is set off with a dark foil: "*To God the Lord belong the issues from death.*" So, in the first for his own sake, in the second for our sakes, in the third for his own and ours; as God, as Lord, as a benefactor; as a Saviour and deliverer. "*Blessed be the Lord.*" It is not hard to observe that David's *Alleluiahs* are more than his *Hosannas*, his thanks more than his suits. Ofttimes doth he praise God when he begs nothing; seldom ever doth he beg that favour, for which he doth not raise up his soul to an anticipation of thanks; neither is this any other than the universal undersong of all his heavenly ditties, "*Blessed be the Lord.*" *Praises* (as our former translation hath it) is too low; honour is more than praise; blessing is more than honour. Neither is it for nothing that from this word בָּרַךְ, *to bless*, is derived בֶּרֶךְ, *the knee*, which is bowed in blessing; and the crier before *Joseph* proclaimed *Abrech*, calling for the honour of the knee from all beholders. Gen. xli. 43. Every slight, trivial acknowledgment of worth is a praise; blessing is in a higher strain of gratitude, that carries the whole sway of the heart with it in a kind of divine rapture. Praise is a matter of compliment; blessing of devotion. The apostle's rule is, *that the less is blessed of the greater*, *Abraham* of the King of Salem, the prophet's charge is, that *the greater should be blessed of the less*, yea, the greatest of the least, God of man. This agrees well; blessing is an act that will bear reciprocation; God blesseth man, and man blesseth God. God blesseth man imperatively; man blesseth God optatively. God blesseth man in the acts of mercy; man blesseth God in the notions, in the expressions of thanks. God blesses man when he makes him good and happy; man blesseth God when he confesseth how good, how gracious, how glorious he is; so as the blessing is wholly taken up in agnition,* in celebration: in the one we acknowledge the bounty of God to us; in the other we magnify him vocally, really, for that bounty. O see, then, what high account God makes of the affections and actions of his poor, silly, earth-creeping creatures; that he gives us in them power to bless himself, and takes it as an honour to be blessed of us. *David* wonders that God should so vouchsafe to bless man; how much more must we needs wonder at the mercy of God, that will vouchsafe to be blessed by man,

* Agnition, acknowledgment.

a worm, an atom, a nothing? Yet both, *James* tells us, that *with the tongue we bless God;* and the psalmist calls for it here as a service of dear acceptation, "*Blessed be the Lord.*" Even we men live not (chameleon like) upon the air of thanks, nor grow the fatter for praises; how much less our Maker? O God, we know well that whatsoever men or angels do, or do not, thou canst not but be infinitely blessed in thyself; before ever any creature was, thou didst equally enjoy thy blessed self from all eternity: what can this worthless, loose film of flesh either add to or detract from thine infiniteness? Yet thou, *that humblest thyself to behold the things that are done in heaven and earth*, humblest thyself also to accept the weak breath of our praises, that are sent up to thee from earth to heaven. How should this encourage the vows, the endeavours of our hearty thankfulness, to see them graciously taken? If men would take up with good words, with good desires, and quit our bonds for thanks, who would be a debtor? With the God of Mercy this cheap payment is current. If he, then, will honour us so far as to be blessed of us, Oh let us honour him so far as to bless him.—*Joseph Hall, in "A Sermon of Public Thanksgiving for the Wonderful Mitigation of the late Mortality."* 1625.

Verse 19.—"*Blessed be the Lord.*" It is not a little remarkable to see the saints so burdened and overcharged with the duty of singing his praise, that, 1. They are forced to come off with an excess of praise, and offer to praise him, and even leave it, as it were, as they found it, and say no more, lest they should spill his praises; but, as Rev. v. 12, "Worthy is the Lamb to receive glory and honour," though I be not worthy or able to give it to him. 2. That they speak broken language and half sentences in their songs, when they are deeply loaden with the deep sense of his love, as "*Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits;*" there is no more in the original but "*Blessed be the Lord, that loadeth us.*"—*John Spalding, in "Synaxis Sacra."* 1703.

Verse 19.—"*Who daily loadeth us with benefits.*" Though some may have more than others, yet every one hath his load, as much as he can carry. Every vessel cannot bear up with the like sail, and therefore God, to keep us from oversetting, puts on so much as will safest bring us to heaven, our desired port. —*Ezekiel Hopkins.*

Verse 19.—"*Who daily loadeth us with benefits.*" Such is man's self-love that no inward worth can so attract his praises as outward beneficence. While thou makest much of thyself, every one shall speak well of thee; how much more while thou makest much of them! Here God hath met with us also. Not to perplex you with scanning the variety of senses wherewith I have observed this Psalm, above all other of David's, to abound; see here, I beseech you, a fourfold gradation of divine bounty. First, here are "*benefits.*" The word is not expressed in the original, but necessarily implied in the sense: for there are but three loads whereof man is capable from God, favours, precepts, punishments, the other two are out of the road of gratulation. When we might therefore have expected judgments, behold *benefits.* And those, secondly, not sparingly hand-fulled out to us, but dealt to us by the whole load: "*loadeth with benefits.*" Whom, thirdly, doth he load but "*us*"? Not worthy and well-deserving subjects, but "*us*," סוֹרְרִים, *rebels.* And, lastly, this he doth, not at one dole and no more (as even churls' rare feasts use to be plentiful), but יוֹם יוֹם successively, unweariedly, perpetually. One favour were too much, here are "*benefits;*" a sprinkling were too much, here is a *load*; once were too oft, here is *daily* largition.* Cast your eyes, therefore, a little upon this threefold exaggeration of beneficence; the measure, *a load of benefits;* the subject, unworthy "*us;*" the time, "*daily.*" "*Who daily loadeth us with benefits.*"

Where shall we begin to survey this vast load of mercies? Were it no more, but that he hath given us a world to live in, a life to enjoy, air to breathe in, earth to tread on, fire to warm us, water to cool and cleanse us, clothes to cover us, food to nourish us, sleep to refresh us, houses to shelter us, variety of creatures

* Largition, largess, bounty.

to serve and delight us; here were a just load. But now, if we yet add to these, civility of breeding, dearness of friends, competency of estate, degrees of honour, honesty or dignity of vocation, favour of princes, success in employments, domestic comforts, outward peace, good reputation, preservation from dangers, rescue from evils; the load is well mended. If yet, ye shall come closer, and add due proportion of body, integrity of parts, perfection of senses, strength of nature, mediocrity of health, sufficiency of appetite, vigour of digestion, wholesome temper of seasons, freedom from cares; this course must needs heighten it yet more. If still ye shall add to these, the order, and power, and exercise of our inward faculties, enriched with wisdom, art, learning, experience, expressed by a not un-handsome elocution, and shall now lay all these together that concern estate, body, mind; how can the axle-tree of the soul but crack under the load of these favours? But, if from what God hath done for us as men, we look to what he hath done for us as Christians; that he hath embraced us with an everlasting love, that he hath moulded us anew, enlivened us by his Spirit, fed us by his word and sacraments, clothed us with his merits, bought us with his blood, becoming vile to make us glorious, a curse, to invest us with blessedness; in a word, that he hath given himself to us, his Son for us; *Oh the height, and depth, and breadth* of the rich mercies of our God! Oh the boundless, topless, bottomless, load of divine benefits, whose immensity reaches from the centre of this earth, to the unlimited extent of the very empyreal heavens! "*Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he hath done for the children of men.*"—*Joseph Hall.*

Verse 20.—"*Our God is the God of salvation*" (that is of deliverance, of outward deliverance); "*and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death,*" or the goings out from death; that is, God hath all ways that lead out from death in his own keeping, he keepeth the key of the door that lets us out from death. When a man is in the valley of the shadow of death, where shall he issue out? Where shall he have a passage? Nowhere, saith man, he shall not escape. But God keepeth all the passages; when men think they have shut us up in the jaws of death, he can open them, and deliver us. "*To him belong the issues from death;*" it is an allusion to one that keepeth a passage or a door: and God is a faithful keeper, and a friendly keeper, who will open the door for the escape of his people, when they cry unto him.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 20.—"*And unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.*" Buildings stand by the benefit of their foundations that sustain them, support them; and of their buttresses that comprehend them, embrace them; and of their contignations* that knit and unite them. The foundation suffers them not to sink; the buttresses suffer them not to swerve; the contignation and knitting suffer them not to cleave. The body of our building is in the former part of this verse; it is this; He that is our God is the God of salvation; *ad salutes*, of salvations, in the plural, so it is in the original; the God that gives us spiritual and temporal salvation too. But of this building, the foundation, the buttresses, the contignation, are in this part of the verse, which constitutes our text, and in the three diverse acceptations of the words amongst our expositors, "*Unto God the Lord belong the issues of death.*" For, first, the foundation of this building (that our God is the God of all salvation) is laid in this, "*That unto this God the Lord belong the issues of death;*" that is, it is in his power to give us an issue and deliverance, even then, when we are brought to the jaws and teeth of death, and to the lips of that whirlpool, the grave; and so, in this acceptation, this *exitus mortis*, the issue of death, is *liberatio a morte*, a deliverance from death; and this is the most obvious and most ordinary acceptation of these words, and that upon which our translation lays hold: "*the issues from death.*"

* Contignation, a framing together; from *contigno*, to join together, or lay with beams and rafters.

And then, secondly, the buttresses that comprehend and settle this building; that, "*He that is our God is the God of salvation*," are thus raised; "*Unto God the Lord belong the issues of death*," that is, the disposition and manner of our death, what kind of issue and transmigration we shall have out of this world, whether prepared or sudden, whether violent or natural, whether in our perfect senses or shaked and disordered by sickness; there is [no] condemnation to be argued out of that, no judgment to be made upon that; for howsoever they die, *precious in his sight is the death of his saints*, and with him are the issues of death, the ways of our departing out of this life are in his hands; and so in this sense of the words, this *exitus mortis*, the issue of death, is *liberatio in morte*, a deliverance in death; not that God will deliver us from dying, but that he will have a care of us in the hour of death, of what kind soever our passage be; and this sense and acceptation of the words, the natural frame and contexture doth well and pregnantly administer unto us. And then, lastly, the contignation and knitting of this building, that He that is our God, is the God of all salvation, consists in this, Unto this God the Lord belong the issues of death, that is, that this God the Lord, having united and knit both natures in one, and being God, having also come into this world, in our flesh, he could have no other means to save us, he could have no other issue out of this world, no return to his former glory, but by death. And so in this sense, this *exitus mortis*, the issue of death, is *liberatio per mortem*, a deliverance by death, by the death of this God our Lord, Christ Jesus; and this, St. Augustine's acceptation of the words, and those many and great persons that have adhered to him. In all these three lines then, we shall look upon these words, first, as the God of power, the Almighty Father, rescues his servants from the jaws of death; and then, as the God of mercy, the glorious Son rescued us by taking upon himself the issue of death; and then (between these two), as the God of comfort, the Holy Ghost rescues us from all discomfort, by his blessed impressions before; that what manner of death soever be ordained for us, yet this *exitus mortis* shall be *introitus in vitam*, our issue in death shall be an entrance into everlasting life. And these three considerations, our deliverance *a morte*, *in morte*, *per mortem*, from death, in death, and by death, will abundantly do all the offices of the foundation, of the buttresses, of the contignation of this our building, that "*He that is our God is the God of salvation*," because "*Unto this God the Lord belong the issues of death*."—*John Donne.*

Verse 20.—"*The issues from death.*" That is, the issue, or escape, from death, both in the resurrection and in the various perils of our present life.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 20.—"*Issues from death.*" The English version cannot be sustained by the Hebrew; for ל has never the force of *from*, and, therefore, the expression, as Dr. Hammond observes, must signify the several plagues and judgments inflicted by God on impenitent enemies—such as drowning in the sea, killing by the sword, etc.; which were the ways of punishing and destroying the Egyptians and Canaanites. Thus the two members of the verse are antithetical: the first speaks of God as a deliverer, and the second as a punisher; and in this respect the verse corresponds with the preceding.—*George Phillips*, in "*The Psalms. . . . . with a Critical, Exegetical, and Philological Commentary.*" 1846.

Verse 21.—"*The hairy scalp.*" That is, even the most fearful enemies, that with their ghastly visage, deformed with long hair, would strike a terror into the hearts of beholders.—*Edward Leigh.*

Verse 21.—"*Hairy scalp.*" It was a practice among some of the ancient inhabitants of Arabia to allow the hair to grow luxuriantly on the *top of the head*, and to shave the head in other parts.—*Francis Hare.* 1740.

Verse 22.—"*I will bring the enemy.*" Both the preceding and following verse prove that this is the sense, and not as many interpreters supply, *my*

people. Bashan was *east* of Judæa, and the *sea* on the west; so that the meaning is, that God would bring his enemies from every quarter to be slain by his people.—*Benjamin Boothroyd.*

Verse 23.—"*That thy foot may be dipped,*" etc. The blood of thy enemies, shed in such abundance that thy dogs shall lap and drink it, shall be the sea in which thou shalt pass, and that red without a figure. And, proportionably shall be the destructions on the enemies of Christ and Christians in the age of the Messiah.—*Henry Hammond.*

Verses 26—28.—This Psalm was sung, it is probable, on the removal of the ark into the City of David. Numb. x. It was now that the ark had rest, and the tribes assembled three times a year at Jerusalem, the place that God had chosen. The text is a lively description of their worship.

I. Offer a few remarks by way of expounding the passage. 1. Israel had their lesser congregations in ordinary every Sabbath-day, and their national ones three times a year. Their business in all was *to bless God.* 2. This business was to be carried on by *all Israel,* beginning at the fountain head, and proceeding through all its streams. God has blessed Israel; let Israel bless God. 3. All the tribes are supposed to be present; four are mentioned in the name of the whole, as inhabiting the confines of the land. Their union was a source of joy; they had been divided by civil wars, but now they are met together. 4. Those tribes which are named had each something particular attending it. Little Benjamin (see Judges xxi.) had nearly been a tribe lacking in Israel, but now appears with its ruler. Judah had been at war with Benjamin: Saul was a Benjamite; David was of Judah: yet they happily lost their antipathies in the worship of God. Zebulun and Naphtali were distant tribes; yet they were there! dark, too, yet there. 5. The princes and the people were all together. 6. They were supposed to be strong, but were reminded that what they had of strength was of God's commanding. Their union and success, as well as that degree of righteousness among them which exalted the nation, was of God. They are not so strong, but that they need strengthening, and are directed to pray as well as praise: "*Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.*"

II. Apply the subject. Two things are here exemplified, namely—diligence and brotherly union; and three things recommended, namely—united praise; united acknowledgment that, for what they are, they are indebted to God; and united prayer for future mercies. Each of these affords a rule for us. 1. The worship of God must be attended with *diligence.* There are the princes of Zebulun and Naphtali. They had to travel above two hundred miles three times a year, thither and back again; that is, twelve hundred in a year, twenty-four miles a week. Those who neglect the worship of God for little difficulties show that their heart is not in it, and when they do attend cannot expect to profit: "they have snuffed at it." Those whose hearts are in it often reap great advantage. God blessed the Israelites in their journeys, as well as when there (Psalm lxxxiv. 6): "The rain filleth the pools;" and so the Christians. There is a peculiar promise to those that seek him *early.* 2. The worship of God must be attended to with *brotherly love.* All the tribes must go up together. It is a kind law that enjoins *social* worship; we need each other to stimulate. "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." God has made us so that we shall be greatly influenced by each other, both to good and evil. It greatly concerns us to cultivate such a spirit. To this end we must cherish an affectionate behaviour in our common intercourse—bear, forbear, and forgive; and, whatever differences we may have, not suffer them to hinder our worship. The tribes, as we have seen, had their differences; yet they were there. When all Israel met at Hebron to anoint David king, what should we have said if some had kept away because others went? 3. Our business, when assembled, must be to *bless God* in our congregations; and a

pleasant work this is. Israel had reasons, and great reasons, and Christians more. Thank him for his unspeakable gift; bless him for the means of grace, and the hopes of glory. Bless him; he "healeth all thy diseases," etc. Psalm ciii. This is an employment that fits for heaven. The tears of a mourner in God's house were supposed to defile his altar. We may mourn for *sin;* but a fretful spirit, discontented and unthankful, defiles God's altar still. 4. Another part of our business is to unite in acknowledging that whatever we are, we owe it to God alone; "Thy God hath commanded thy strength." We possess a degree of strength both individually and socially. Art thou strong in faith, in hope, in zeal? It is in him thou art strong. Are we strong as a society? It is God that increaseth us with men like a flock; it is he that keeps us in union, gives us success, etc. 5. Another part of our business must be to unite in prayer for future mercies. We are not so strong, either as individuals or societies, but that there is room for increase; and this is the proper object of prayer. God has wrought a great work for us in regeneration. God has wrought much for us as a church in giving us increase, respect, and room in the earth. Pray that each may be increased; or, in the words of the text: "*Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.*" Are there none who are strangers to all this?—*Andrew Fuller.*

Verse 27.—"*Benjamin, Judah, Zebulun, Naphtali.*" The two royal tribes, 1. that of Benjamin, from which the first king sprang; 2. that of Judah, from which the second; and the two learned tribes, Zebulun and Naphtali. And we may note, that the kingdom of the Messiah should at length be submitted to by all the potentates and learned men in the world.—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 27.—"*Benjamin, Judah, Zebulon, Naphtali.*" The same tribes are prominent in the New Testament, as foremost in the battle of the church against the world. Paul, the "least" of the apostles (1 Cor. xv. 8—10), was by origin Saul of Benjamin (Phil. iii. 5). Christ, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," James and John, the brothers, the other James, Thaddeus, and Simon, were from Judah, and the other apostles were from Napthalim and Zabulon, or Galilee (Matt. iv. 13).—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 27.—"*Their ruler.*" The *prince* of that tribe. The Greek version saith, *in a trance;* taking the Hebrew רֹדָם to be of דָּם, though it be not found elsewhere in this form; yet rare words but once used, are sundry times found in this and other Psalms. These things applied to Christ's times and after are very mystical. *Benjamin*, the least, is put here *first;* so in the heavenly Jerusalem, the *first foundation is a jasper* (Rev. xxi. 19), which was the *last* precious stone in Aaron's breastplate, on which *Benjamin's* name was graven (Exod. xxviii. 10, 20, 21). In this tribe *Paul* excelled as a prince of God, though one of the least apostles (1 Cor. xv. 8—10), who was converted in a *trance* or *ecstacy* (Acts ix. 3, 4, etc.); and in ecstacies he and other apostles saw the mysteries of Christ's kingdom.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 27.—"*Their council;*" or, *their stone*, the Messiah, that sprung from Judah, Gen. xlix. 24; Ps. cxviii. 22.—*John Gill.*

Verses 27, 28.—There are all the twelve tribes of Israel with their rulers present, to conduct the ark of God to the hill, in which it pleased him to dwell; for, though all the tribes are not mentioned, these, which are named, include the whole, since Zebulun and Naphtali are the most remote, and Judah and Benjamin the nearest tribes to Zion. Benjamin was a dwindled family through the signal depopulation of that tribe, from which it never entirely recovered. Jud. xx. 43—48; 1 Chron. xii. 29.—*Edward Garrard Marsh, in "The Book of Psalms translated into English Verse . . . with Practical and Explanatory Notes."* 1832

Verse 28.—"*Thy God hath commanded thy strength.*" Singularly appropriate to the occasion for which they were composed are these stimulating words.

The ark of God had during several years been kept in private houses. David had pitched a tent for its reception, and intended providing a better shrine; he would deposit the ark in the temporary sanctuary, and he gathers thirty thousand chosen men of Israel, and with these and with a multitude of the people he proceeds to the house in which the ark had been kept. The people *can* render the service of song, so "David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of firwood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals" (2 Sam. vi. 5). The breach of Uzzah delayed the restoration of the ark three months; but David returned to the work, and with gladness, with burnt offerings and peace offerings, with feasting, dancing, and the sound of a trumpet, he brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in its place in the tabernacle he had pitched for it. David *can* provide a sacred place for the ark of his God, and his "God has commanded his strength." Thirty thousand chosen men *can* attend on this occasion, and a multitude besides. Then, why should they tarry at home? The occasion is worthy of their presence, and their "God has commanded their strength." There are sweet singers and skilful players in Israel, and why should they be silent. The occasion calls for praise, and their "God has commanded their strength." There are cattle upon the thousand hills of Canaan, and shall no sacrifice be brought? The occasion demands oblations, and Israel's "God has commanded their strength." There is a mountain in Canaan, beautiful for situation, and rich in historic association. God's ark *can* be brought to this mountain, and if it can be, it ought to be, for Israel God has commanded Israel's strength. There are twelve tribes in Israel which may unite in bringing up God's ark, then let none hold back, for their "God has commanded their strength" "*Thy strength*" is thy best—all that is within thee; all that thou canst do, and be, and become; and all that thou hast—the two mites, if these be all, and the alabaster box of spikenard, very costly, if this be thy possession. . . . By that which God is in himself, by that which God is to us, by law on the heart, and by law oral and written, by the new kingdom of his love, and by all his benefits, "*Thy God commands thy strength.*" He speaks from the beginning, and from the end of time, from the midst of chaos, and from the new heavens and new earth, from Bethel and from Gethsemane, from Sinai and from Calvary, and he saith to us all, "My son, give me thine heart," consecrate to me thy best, and devote to me thy strength.—*Samuel Martin.*

Verse 30.—"*Rebuke the wild beasts of the reeds.*" This is our marginal version, which is the proper one. Most modern critics consider that the lion is here intended, which frequently makes its den among reeds or brush-wood. Innumerable lions wander about among the reeds and copses, on the borders of the rivers of Mesopotamia. The river Jordan was infested with them (Jer. iv. 7, and xlix. 19). Hence, the wild beasts of the reeds may signify the Syrian kings, who often contended with David.—*Benjamin Boothroyd.*

Verse 30.—The idolatrous king of Egypt is here enigmatically represented as dwelling, like the crocodile, among the reeds of the Nile; and with him are introduced the "*bulls*" and "*calves*," who were the gods of the people of Egypt, before whom they were ever dancing in their superstitious revels. "Quell these insults upon thy majesty, nor put down only the superstition of Egypt, but all their pomp of war also, that the Gentiles may be converted unto thee, and the idols be utterly abolished."—*Edward Garrard Marsh.*

Verse 30.—When the enemies of God rise up against his church, it is time for the church to fall down to God, to implore his aid against those enemies. Holy prayers are more powerful than profane swords.—*Thomas Wall, in "A Comment on the Times."* 1657.

Verse 30.—The words contain, first, a declaration of God's enemies; secondly, an imprecation against those enemies. The enemies are marshalled into four ranks. 1. A company of spearman, or (as some translations read it) the beast of the reeds. 2. The multitude of the bulls. 3. The calves of the

people. 4. The men that delight in war. The imprecation is also twofold, the first more gentle; it is but "*rebuke* the spearmen;" and that with a limitation too—"*till they submit themselves with pieces of silver.*" For they that will not, but delight in war, more severely deal with such: Scatter them; "*Scatter the men that delight in war.*" . . . The church of God never wanted enemies, never will. "There is no peace to the wicked," saith God: there shall be no peace to the godly, say the wicked. The wicked shall have no peace which God can give; the godly shall have no peace which the wicked can take away.—*Thomas Wall.*

Verse 30.—1. Scrupulosity. 2. Envy. 3. Ignorance. 4. Ambition or pride. Upon which these four beasts in the text do act their enmity against the church: scrupulosity sets forth unto us the beast of the reeds; envy, the bulls; ignorance, the calves; and pride, the men "that delight in war."—*Thomas Wall.**

Verse 31.—"*Ethiopia.*" It is a matter of fact, familiar to the learned reader, that the names "*Ethiopia*," and "*Ethiopians*," are frequently substituted in our English version of the Old Testament, where the Hebrew preserves the proper name, "Cush." And the name, "Cush," when so applied in Scripture, belongs uniformly not to the African, but to the Asiatic, Ethiopia, or Arabia.—*Charles Forster, in "The Historical Geography of Arabia."*

Verse 33.—"*And that a mighty voice;*" or, *a voice of strength;* a strong and powerful voice, such as the gospel is, when accompanied with the power and Spirit of God. It is a soul-shaking and awakening voice; it is a heart-melting and a heart-breaking one; it is a quickening and an enlightening voice; it quickens dead sinners, gives life unto them, and the entrance of it gives light to dark minds: it is a soul-charming and alluring one; it draws to Christ, engages the affections to him, and fills with unspeakable delight and pleasure.—*John Gill.*

Verse 33.—"*To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens.*" He who manages the heavens, directing their course and influence. He formed every orb, ascertained its motion, proportioned its solid contents to the orbit in which it was to revolve, and to the other bodies of the same system; and, as an able rider manages his horse, so does God the sun, moon, planets, and all the hosts of heaven.—*W. Greenfield, in Comprehensive Bible.*

Verse 33.—The praises of the church are sung to him, who, after his sufferings here below, reascended to take possession of his ancient throne, high above all heavens; who, from thence, speaketh to the world by his glorious gospel, mighty and powerful, as thunder, in its effects upon the hearts of men (see Ps. xxix. throughout). The power of Christ's voice, when he was on earth, appeared by the effects which followed, when he said, "Young man, arise:" "Lazarus, come forth:" "Peace, be still;" and it will yet further appear, when "all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and come forth."—*George Horne.*

Verse 34.—"*His strength is in the clouds.*" This refers to the phenomena of thunder and lightning; for all nations have observed that the electric fluid is an irresistible agent—destroying life, tearing towers and castles to pieces, rending the strongest oaks, and cleaving the most solid rocks; and the most enlightened nations have justly considered it as an especial manifestation of the power and sovereignty of God.—*W. Greenfield, in Comprehensive Bible.*

* This instance of spiritualising may act rather as a beacon than as an example. The author was an able divine, but in this sermon gives more play to his imagination than his common sense.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verses **1, 2.**—First. The church of God ever had, and will have, enemies and haters; for against these doth the psalmist arm himself and the church with this prayer.

Secondly. The church's enemies are God's enemies; they that hate the church, hate God. "Thine enemies," "them that hate thee."

Thirdly. God sometimes seems to sleep or lie still, and let these enemies and haters do what they will for a season. This, also, is implied: he to whom we say, "Arise," is either asleep or lies still.

Fourthly. There is a time when God will arise.

Fifthly. God's rising time is the enemies' scattering time, his haters' flying time.

Sixthly. It is the duty of God's people to pray him up when he seems to be down, and to exalt him in their praises when he doth arise to their rescue and redemption; for these words are both a prayer and a triumph, as they are used both by Moses and David.—*Thomas Case, in a Fast Sermon, preached before the House of Commons, entitled, "God's Rising, his Enemies' Scattering."* **1644.**

Verses 1—3.—Prayer for the Second Advent.—*A. M'Caul.*

Verse 4.—I. The name that inspires the song: "Jah." 1. Self-existent. 2. Immutable. 3. Eternal. II. The song inspired by that name. 1. Of exultation. 2. Of confidence. 3. Of joy.—*G. R.*

Verse 5.—The claims of widows and orphans upon the church of God, from God's relation to them and his indwelling in the church.

Verse 6.—Comparison of churches to families. See extract from *Dr. Gill.*

Verse 6.—I. Two curable evils: "solitary," "bound with chains." II. Two rich blessings: "set in families," "bringeth out." III. One monster evil, and its miserable consequences.

Verses 7, 8.—I. God has his seasons for delivering his people from their troubles: "When thou," etc. II. His deliverance is complete: "The earth shook," etc.; all things gave way before him. III. The deliverance is greater for the delay. 1. It is so in itself. 2. It is more prized: as in the case of Job, Abraham, Israel at the Red Sea, Daniel, his three companions, etc. —*G. R.*

Verses 7, 8, 9.—I. The presence of God in his church. 1. His pre-eminence: "before." 2. As covenant God of Israel. 3. As active and making active. 4. His rule within: they follow. 5. His design without: marching for war. II. The blessed consequences. 1. The most stolid shake. 2. The lofty bow. 3. Difficulties removed: "Sinai." 4. Blessings plenteous. 5. Church revived.

Verse 9.—I. God's mercy compared to a shower. 1. It is direct from heaven; not through priests. 2. It is pure and unmixed. 3. No one has a monopoly of it. 4. There is no substitute for it. 5. It is sovereignly dispensed, as to (1) time; (2) place; (3) manner; and (4) measure. 6. It works efficiently. Isaiah lv. 10. 7. Prayer can get it. II. There are seasons when these showers fall. 1. In the house of God. 2. In the means of grace. 3. In prayer. 4. In affliction. 5. When saints are weary (1) through working; (2) through sickness; (3) through non-success. 6. By the Holy Spirit refreshing the heart. III. These showers are meant to "confirm" God's people. IV. They are wanted *now.*

Verse 9.—I. The church is God's inheritance. 1. Chosen. 2. Purchased. 3. Acquired. II. Though his inheritance, at times it may be weary. III. When weary, it will be refreshed by him.—*G. R.*

Verse 10 (*second clause*).—Special goodness, for a special people, specially prepared.

Verse 10 (*second clause*).—It is spoken in reference to the "*poor*," because, I. They are the larger mass of mankind; and, whatever pride may think, in

the eye of reason, policy, and revelation, by far the most important, useful, and necessary part. II. They would be more peculiarly affected by deficiency. III. To encourage those in humble and trying life to depend upon him. IV. To enforce our attention to them from the divine example.—*W. Jay.*

Verse 11.—The divinity of the gospel; the divers ways and agents for its publication.

Verses 11, 12.—I. The word given: "The Lord," etc. II. The word proclaimed: "Great," etc. III. The word obeyed: "Kings," etc. Thus it was in Old Testament times, when to Joshua, to Gideon, to David, etc., the Lord gave the word, and it ran through the hosts, and "kings of armies," etc. Thus it was in apostolic times, when the word of reconciliation was given. Thus it is still, and will be more signally than ever hereafter.—*G. R.*

Verse 12 (*last clause*).—The church in redemption as a spouse tarrying at home; her home duties; the spoil of her Lord's glorious and finished work, and her dividing it.

Verse 13.—I. The contrast. 1. Instead of humiliation, exaltation. 2. Instead of pollution, purity. 3. Instead of inertness, activity. 4. Instead of deformity, beauty. II. Its application. 1. To penitence and pardon. 2. To depravity and regeneration. 3. To affliction and recovery. 4. To desertion and consolation. 5. To death and glory.—*G. R.*

Verse 14.—I. Where earth's greatest battles are fought. "Scattered," "in it," *i.e.*, in Zion. "There brake he," etc. II. By whom? The Almighty. III. When? In answer to his people's faith and prayer. IV. How? 1. Without noise, gently: as the fall of snow. 2. Without human aid: as untrodden snow. 3. Without violence: "all bloodless lay the untrodden snow."—*G. R.*

Verses 15, 16.—I. The superiority of the hill of Zion. 1. In fertility, to the hill of Bashan; to earthly pleasures. 2. In glory, to other hills; to human heights of learning and power. II. The reason of that superiority. 1. The place of God's choice. 2. Of his delight. 3. Of his abode. 4. Of his continuance for ever.—*G. R.*

Verse 16.—I. The church the dwelling-place of God. 1. Elected of old 2. Favoured for ever. 3. Affording rest, etc., as a home for God. 4. Receiving honour, etc., for herself. II. The church, therefore, envied by others. 1. They feel their own greatness outdone. 2. They leap with rage. 3. They are unreasonable in so doing.

Verses 17, 18.—I. The comparison between Zion and Sinai. 1. The same Lord is there: "The Lord is among," etc. 2. The same attendants: "The chariots," etc. II. The contrast. 1. God descended at Sinai, ascended from near Zion. 2. Put a yoke upon them at Sinai, leads captivity captive at Zion. 3. At Sinai demanded obedience, in Zion bestows gifts. 4. In Sinai spoke terror, in Zion receives gifts for the rebellious. 5. In Sinai appeared for a short season, in Zion dwells for ever.—*G. R.*

Verse 18.—I. Christ's *ascension.* II. His *victories.* III. The *gifts* he received for men; and IV. The great *end* for which he bestows them.—*J. Newton.*

Verse 18.—"*That the Lord God might dwell among them.*" It is ground for devout wonder that God should dwell among men, when we contemplate his *immensity*, *loftiness*, *independence*, *holiness*, and *sovereignty*; yet he does so—I. In the coming of Christ into the world. II. In the residence of his Spirit in the heart. III. In the presence of God in his churches.—*William Staughton, D.D.* 1770—1829.

Verse 19.—I. The load of benefits. II. The load of obligation. III. The load of praise due in return.

Verse 19.—I. Salvation is not to be forgotten in the midst of daily mercies. II Daily mercies are not to be forgotten in the enjoyment of salvation.—*G. R.*

Verse 20.—Death in God's hand. I. Escapes from it. II. Entrances to it. III. The exit out of it beyond. IV. The gate which, when closed, shuts us in it for ever.

Verse 20.—I. What God has been to his people. 1. Their salvation. 2 Their portion: "Our God." II. What he will be: With them. 1. Until death 2. In death. 3. After death.—*G. R.*

Verse 21. The power, pride, wisdom, and very life of evil, to be conquered by God.

Verse 22.—I. Where his people may be driven. II. The certainty of their return. III. The reasons for being assured of this.

Verse 23.—*The allowable procession in the sanctuary.* The marshalled order of doctrine, the holy walk of believers, the banners of joy, the music of devotions, the shouts to the King.

Verse 24 (*last clause*).—Work for holy women in the church.

Verse 27.—I. The variety of song. 1. The royal tribe of Benjamin in the time of Saul. 2. The princely tribe of Judah, as David was prince regent in the time of Saul. 3. The literary tribe of Zebulun: "Out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer." 4. The eloquent tribe: "Naphtali giveth goodly words." II. The harmony of song. Let all unite in praising the Lord, the fountain of Israel. "Ten thousand thousand are their tongues," etc.—*G. R.*

Verses 30, 31.—I. Hindrances to the progress of divine truth. 1. Idolatry Worship of the crocodile—"beasts of the reeds," (LXX)—of bulls and calves, as in Egypt. 2. Covetousness. 3. War. II. The means for their removal Prayer and the divine "rebuke." "Scatter thou," etc. III. The consequences of this removal; verse 31.

Verse 35. I. Consider God's jealousy towards his people for his holiness in the three "holy places." 1. In the outer court of profession. 2. In the holy place of our priesthood. 3. In the holy of holies with his Son. II. Consider his terribleness to his foes, as inferred from those "holy places."

Verse 35.—"*Blessed be God.*" A brief, but very suggestive text.

WORKS UPON THE SIXTY-EIGHTH PSALM.

A Copious Comment on Psalm LXVIII: in which Salvation by David, the Type of the Messiah, is Preached to all Nations, Tongues, and Tribes, and Peoples. With Strictures on Ainsworth, Calmet, Vitringa, Bythner, Bishop Lowth, Professor Michaelis, De Muis, Merrick, and other Writers on this Psalm. . . London. [Anon. No date. Marked in *British Museum Catalogue.* "By R Clarke, London. 1770 ?"]

The Sixty-Eighth Psalm; as Prophetic of the Messiah and His Church. A Translation from the Hebrew; with Explanatory Notes. By A Septuagenarian. . . . . London: S. Bagster & Sons. [1860.] Value doubtful.

In Chandler's "*Life of David,*" Vol. II. pp. 38—113, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.

In the works of John Boys, 1626, folio, pp. 913—919, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.

A New Interpretation of the Sixty-Eighth Psalm: to which is added An Exposition of the Hundred and Tenth Psalm. . . . By the Rev. Richard Dixon, A.M., F.R.S., Fellow of Queen's College [Oxford]. 1811.

[This author, in a most interesting manner, traces out the analogy between this Psalm and the song of Deborah. He gives his reasons for believing that this Psalm was written to celebrate the glorious victory obtained by Deborah and Barak over Sisera and Jabin; and these are exceedingly instructive, if not always convincing. A digest of this treatise was prepared for our Treasury, but on second thoughts we have reluctantly resolved to omit it, as we cannot afford so much space for one Psalm. Readers who can procure Mr Dixon's work will be well repaid for the time spent in its perusal.—*C. H. S.*]

PSALM LXIX.

Title.—To the Chief Musician upon Shoshannim. *Thus for the second time we have a Psalm entitled "upon the lilies." In the forty-first they were golden lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh, and blooming in the fair gardens which skirt the ivory palaces: in this we have the lily among thorns, the lily of the valley, fair and beautiful, blooming in the garden of Gethsemane.* A Psalm of David. *If any enquire, "of whom speaketh the psalmist this? of himself, or of some other man?" we would reply, "of himself, and of some other man." Who that other is, we need not be long in discovering; it is the Crucified alone who can say, "in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." His footprints all through this sorrowful song have been pointed out by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, and therefore we believe, and are sure, that the Son of Man is here. Yet it seems to be the intention of the Spirit, while he gives us personal types, and so shows the likeness to the first-born which exists in the heirs of salvation, to set forth also the disparities between the best of the sons of men, and the Son of God, for there are verses here which we dare not apply to our Lord; we almost shudder when we see our brethren attempting to do so, as for instance verse 5. Especially do we note the difference between David and the Son of David in the imprecations of the one against his enemies, and the prayers of the other for them. We commence our exposition of this Psalm with much trembling, for we feel that we are entering with our Great High Priest into the most holy place.*

Divisions.—*This Psalm consists of two portions of* 18 *verses each. These again may each be sub-divided into three parts. Under the first head, from verses* 1—4, *the sufferer spreads his complaint before God; then he pleads that his zeal for God is the cause of his sufferings, in verses* 5—12: *and this encourages him to plead for help and deliverance, from verses* 13—18. *In the second half of the Psalm he details the injurious conduct of his adversaries, from verses* 19—21; *calls for their punishment, verses* 22—28, *and then returns to prayer, and to a joyful anticipation of divine interposition and its results, verses* 29—36.

EXPOSITION.

SAVE me, O God; for the waters are come in unto *my* soul.

2 I sink in deep mire, where *there is* no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.

3 I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.

4 They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, *being* mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored *that* which I took not away.

1. "*Save me, O God.*" "He saved others, himself he cannot save." With strong cryings and tears he offered up prayers and supplications unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared (Heb. v. 7). Thus David had prayed, and here his Son and Lord utters the same cry. This is the second Psalm which begins with a "Save me, O God," and the former (Ps. liv.) is but a short summary of this more lengthened complaint. It is remarkable that such a scene of woe should be presented to us immediately after the jubilant ascension hymn of the last Psalm, but this only shows how

interwoven are the glories and the sorrows of our ever-blessed Redeemer The head which now is crowned with glory is the same which wore the thorns. he to whom we pray, "Save us, O God," is the selfsame person who cried, "Save me, O God." "*For the waters are come in unto my soul.*" Sorrows, deep, abounding, deadly, had penetrated his inner nature. Bodily anguish is not his first complaint; he begins not with the gall which embittered his lips, but with the mighty griefs which broke into his heart. All the sea outside a vessel is less to be feared than that which finds its way into the hold. A wounded spirit who can bear. Our Lord in this verse is seen before us as a Jonah, crying, "The waters compassed me about, even to the soul." He was doing business for us on the great waters, at his Father's command; the stormy wind was lifting up the waves thereof, and he went down to the depths till his soul was melted because of trouble In all this he has sympathy with us, and is able to succour us when we, like Peter, beginning to sink, cry to him, "Lord, save, or we perish."

2. "*I sink in deep mire.*" In water one might swim, but in mud and mire all struggling is hopeless; the mire sucks down its victim. "*Where there is no standing.*" Everything gave way under the Sufferer; he could not get foothold for support—this is a worse fate than drowning. Here our Lord pictures the close, clinging nature of his heart's woes. "He began to be sorrowful, and very heavy." Sin is as mire for its filthiness, and the holy soul of the Saviour must have loathed even that connection with it which was necessary for its expiation. His pure and sensitive nature seemed to sink in it, for it was not his element, he was not like us born and acclimatised to this great dismal swamp. Here our Redeemer became another Jeremiah, of whom it is recorded (Jer. xxxviii. 6) that his enemies cast him into a dungeon wherein "was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire." Let our hearts feel the emotions, both of contrition and gratitude, as we see in this simile the deep humiliation of our Lord. "*I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.*" The sorrow gathers even greater force; he is as one cast into the sea, the waters go over his head. His sorrows were first within, then around, and now above him. Our Lord was no faint-hearted sentimentalist; his were real woes, and though he bore them heroically, yet were they terrible even to him. His sufferings were unlike all others in degree, the waters were such as soaked into the soul; the mire was the mire of the abyss itself, and the floods were deep and overflowing. To us the promise is, "the rivers shall not overflow thee," but no such word of consolation was vouchsafed to him. My soul, thy Well-beloved endured all this for thee. Many waters could not quench his love, neither could the floods drown it; and, because of this, thou hast the rich benefit of that covenant assurance, "as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee." He stemmed the torrent of almighty wrath, that we might for ever rest in Jehovah's love.

3. "*I am weary of my crying.*" Not of it, but by it, with it. He had prayed till he sweat great drops of blood, and well might physical weariness intervene. "*My throat is dried,*" parched, and inflamed. Long pleading with awful fervour had scorched his throat as with flames of fire. Few, very few, of his saints follow their Lord in prayer so far as this. We are, it is to be feared, more likely to be hoarse with talking frivolities to men than by pleading with God; yet our sinful nature demands more prayer than his perfect humanity might seem to need. His prayers should shame us into fervour. Our Lord's supplications were salted with fire, they were hot with agony; and hence they weakened his system, and made him "a weary man and full of woes." "*Mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.*" He wanted in his direst distress nothing more than his God; that would be all in all to him. Many of us know what watching and waiting mean; and we know something of the failing eye when hope is long deferred: but in all this Jesus bears the palm, no eyes ever failed as his did or for so deep a cause. No painter can ever depict those eyes;

their pencils fail in every feature of his all fair but all marred countenance, but most of all do they come short when they venture to pourtray those eyes which were fountains of tears. He knew how both to pray and to watch, and he would have us learn the like. There are times when we should pray till the throat is dry, and watch till the eyes grow dim. Only thus can we have fellowship with him in his sufferings. What! can we not watch with him one hour? Does the flesh shrink back? O cruel flesh to be so tender of thyself, and so ungenerous to thy Lord!

4. "*They that hate me.*" Surprising sin that men should hate the altogether lovely one, truly is it added, "*without a cause*," for reason there was none for this senseless enmity. He neither blasphemed God, nor injured man. As Samuel said: "Whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed?" Even so might Jesus enquire. Besides, he had not only done us no evil, but he had bestowed countless and priceless benefits. Well might he demand, "For which of these works do ye stone me?" Yet from his cradle to his cross, beginning with Herod and not ending with Judas, he had foes without number; and he justly said, they "*are more than the hairs of mine head.*" Both the civilians and the military, laics and clerics, doctors and drunkards, princes and people, set themselves against the Lord's anointed. "This is the heir, let us kill him that the inheritance may be ours," was the unanimous resolve of all the keepers of the Jewish vineyard; while the Gentiles outside the walls of the garden furnished the instruments for his murder, and actually did the deed. The hosts of earth and hell, banded together, made up vast legions of antagonists, none of whom had any just ground for hating him. "*They that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty.*" It was bad that they were many, but worse that they were mighty. All the ecclesiastical and military powers of his country were arrayed against him. The might of the Sanhedrim, the mob, and the Roman legions were combined in one for his utter destruction: "Away with such a fellow from this earth; it is not fit that he should live," was the shout of his ferocious foes. David's adversaries were on the throne when he was hiding in caverns, and our Lord's enemies were the great ones of the earth; while he, of whom the world was not worthy, was reproached of men and despised of the people. "*Then I restored that which I took not away.*" Though innocent, he was treated as guilty. Though David had no share in plots against Saul, yet he was held accountable for them. In reference to our Lord, it may be truly said that he restores what he took not away; for he gives back to the injured honour of God a recompense, and to man his lost happiness, though the insult of the one and the fall of the other were neither of them, in any sense, his doings. Usually, when the ruler sins the people suffer, but here the proverb is reversed—the sheep go astray, and their wanderings are laid at the Shepherd's door.

5 O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.

6 Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.

7 Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.

8 I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children.

9 For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.

10 When I wept, *and chastened* my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.

11 I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them.

12 They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I *was* the song of the drunkards.

5. "*O God, thou knowest my foolishness.*" David might well say this, but not David's Lord; unless it be understood as an appeal to God as to his freedom from the folly which men imputed to him when they said he was mad. That which was foolishness to men was superlative wisdom before God. How often might we use these words in their natural sense, and if we were not such fools as to be blind to our own folly, this confession would be frequently on our lips. When we feel that we have been foolish we are not, therefore, to cease from prayer, but rather to be more eager and fervent in it. Fools had good need consult with the infinitely wise. "*And my sins are not hid from thee.*" They cannot be hid with any fig leaves of mine; only the covering which thou wilt bring me can conceal their nakedness and mine. It ought to render confession easy, when we are assured that all is known already. That prayer which has no confession in it may please a Pharisee's pride, but will never bring down justification. They who have never seen their sins in the light of God's omniscience are quite unable to appeal to that omniscience in proof of their piety. He who can say, "*Thou knowest my foolishness,*" is the only man who can add, "But thou knowest that I love thee."

6. "*Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake.*" If he were deserted, others who were walking in the same path of faith would be discouraged and disappointed. Unbelievers are ready enough to catch at anything which may turn humble faith into ridicule, therefore, O God of all the armies of Israel, let not my case cause the enemy to blaspheme — such is the spirit of this verse. Our blessed Lord ever had a tender concern for his people, and would not have his own oppression of spirit become a source of discouragement to them. "*Let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.*" He appealed to the Lord of hosts by his power to help him, and now to the God of Israel by his covenant faithfulness to come to the rescue. If the captain of the host fail, how will it fare with the rank and file? If David flee, what will his followers do? If the king of believers shall find his faith unrewarded, how will the feeble ones hold on their way? Our Lord's behaviour during his sharpest agonies is no cause of shame to us; he wept, for he was man, but he murmured not, for he was sinless man; he cried, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" for he was human, but he added, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt," for his humanity was without taint of rebellion. In the depths of tribulation no repining word escaped him, for there was no repining in his heart. The Lord of martyrs witnessed a good confession. He was strengthened in the hour of peril, and came off more than a conqueror, as we also shall do, if we hold fast our confidence even to the end.

7. "*Because for thy sake I have borne reproach.*" Because he undertook to do the Father's will, and teach his truth, the people were angry; because he declared himself to be the Son of God, the priesthood raved. They could find no real fault in him, but were forced to hatch up a lying accusation before they could commence their sham trial of him. The bottom of the quarrel was, that God was with him, and he with God, while the Scribes and Pharisees sought only their own honour. Reproach is at all times very cutting to a man of integrity, and it must have come with acute force upon one of so unsullied a character as our Lord: yet see, how he turns to his God, and finds his consolation in the fact that he is enduring all for his Father's sake. The like comfort belongs to all misrepresented and persecuted saints. "*Shame hath covered my face.*" Men condemned to die frequently had their faces covered as they were dragged away from the judge's seat, as was the case with the

wicked Haman in Esther vii. 8: after this fashion they first covered our Lord with a veil of opprobious accusation, and then hurried him away to be crucified. Moreover, they passed him through the trial of cruel mockings, besmeared his face with spittle, and covered it with bruises, so that Pilate's "Ecce Homo" called the world's attention to an unexampled spectacle of woe and shame. The stripping on the cross must also have suffused the Redeemer's face with a modest blush, as he hung there exposed to the cruel gaze of a ribald multitude. Ah, blessed Lord, it was our shame which thou wast made to bear! Nothing more deserves to be reproached and despised than sin, and lo, when thou wast made sin for us thou wast called to endure abuse and scorn. Blessed be thy name it is over now, but we owe thee more than heart can conceive for thine amazing stoop of love.

8. "*I am become a stranger unto my brethren.*" The Jews his brethren in race rejected him, his family his brethren by blood were offended at him, his disciples his brethren in spirit forsook him and fled; one of them sold him, and another denied him with oaths and cursings. Alas, my Lord, what pangs must have smitten thy loving heart to be thus forsaken by those who should have loved thee, defended thee, and, if need be, died for thee. "*And an alien unto my mother's children.*" These were the nearest of relatives, the children of a father with many wives felt the tie of consanguinity but loosely, but children of the same mother owned the band of love; yet our Lord found his nearest and dearest ones ashamed to own him. As David's brethren envied him, and spake evil of him, so our Lord's relatives by birth were jealous of him, and his best beloved followers in the hour of his agony were afraid to be known as having any connection with him. These were sharp arrows of the mighty in the soul of Jesus, the most tender of friends. May none of us ever act as if we were strangers to him; never may we treat him as if he were an alien to us: rather let us resolve to be crucified with him, and may grace turn the resolve into fact.

9. "*For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.*" His burning ardour, like the flame of a candle, fed on his strength and consumed it. His heart, like a sharp sword, cut through the scabbard. Some men are eaten up with lechery, others with covetousness, and a third class with pride, but the master-passion with our great leader was the glory of God, jealousy for his name, and love to the divine family. Zeal for God is so little understood by men of the world, that it always draws down opposition upon those who are inspired with it; they are sure to be accused of sinister motives, or of hypocrisy, or of being out of their senses. When zeal eats us up, ungodly men seek to eat us up too, and this was pre-eminently the case with our Lord, because his holy jealousy was pre-eminent. With more than a seraph's fire he glowed, and consumed himself with his fervour. "*And the reproaches of them that reproached thee have fallen upon me.*" Those who habitually blasphemed God now curse me instead. I have become the butt for arrows intended for the Lord himself. Thus, the Great Mediator was, in this respect, a substitute for God as well as for man, he bore the reproaches aimed at the one, as well as the sins committed by the other.

10. "*When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.*" Having resolved to hate him, everything he did was made a fresh reason for reviling. If he ate and drank as others, he was a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber; if he wept himself away and wore himself out with fasting, then he had a devil and was mad. Nothing is more cruel than prejudice, its eye colours all with the medium through which it looks, and its tongue rails at all indiscriminately. Our Saviour wept much in secret for our sins, and no doubt his private soul-chastenings on our behalf were very frequent. Lone mountains and desert places saw repeated agonies, which, if they could disclose them, would astonish us indeed. The emaciation which these exercises wrought in our Lord made him appear nearly fifty years old when he was but little over thirty; this which was to his honour was used as a matter of reproach against him.

11. "*I made sackcloth also my garment.*" This David did literally, but we have no reason to believe that Jesus did. In a spiritual sense he, as one filled with grief, was always a sackcloth wearer. "*And I became a proverb to them.*" He was ridiculed as "the man of sorrows," quoted as "the acquaintance of grief." He might have said, "here I and sorrow sit." This which should have won him pity only earned him new and more general scorn. To interweave one's name into a mocking proverb is the highest stretch of malice, and to insult one's acts of devotion is to add profanity to cruelty.

12. "*They that sit in the gate speak against me.*" The ordinary gossips who meet at the city gates for idle talk make me their theme, the business men who there resort for trade forget their merchandise to slander me, and even the beggars who wait at men's doors for alms contribute their share of insult to the heap of infamy. "*And I was the song of the drunkard.*" The ungodly know no merrier jest than that in which the name of the holy is traduced. The flavour of slander is piquante, and gives a relish to the revellers' wine. The character of the man of Nazareth was so far above the appreciation of the men of strength to mingle strong drink, it was so much out of their way and above their thoughts, that it is no wonder it seemed to them ridiculous, and therefore well adapted to create laughter over their cups. The saints are ever choice subjects for satire. Butler's Hudibras owed more of its popularity to its irreligious banter than to any intrinsic cleverness. To this day the tavern makes rare fun of the tabernacle, and the ale-bench is the seat of the scorner. What a wonder of condescension is here that he who is the adoration of angels should stoop to be the song of drunkards! What amazing sin that he whom seraphs worship with veiled faces should be a scornful proverb among the most abandoned of men.

> "The by-word of the passing throng,
> The ruler's scoff, the drunkard's song."

13 But as for me, my prayer *is* unto thee, O LORD, *in* an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.

14 Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.

15 Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.

16 Hear me, O LORD; for thy lovingkindness *is* good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.

17 And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily.

18 Draw nigh unto my soul, *and* redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies.

13. "*But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O Lord.*" He turned to Jehovah in prayer as being the most natural thing for the godly to do in their distress. To whom should a child turn but to his father. He did not answer them; like a sheep before her shearers he was dumb to them, but he opened his mouth unto the Lord his God, for he would hear and deliver. Prayer is never out of season, it stands us in good stead in every evil day. "*In an acceptable time.*" It was a time of rejection with man, but of acceptance with God. Sin ruled on earth, but grace reigned in heaven. There is to each of us an accepted time, and woe be to us if we suffer it to glide away unimproved. God's time must be our time, or it will come to pass that, when time closes, we shall look in vain for space for repentance. Our Lord's prayers were well-timed, and always met with acceptance. "*O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me.*" Even the

perfect one makes his appeal to the rich mercy of God, much more should we. To misery no attribute is more sweet than mercy, and when sorrows multiply, the multitude of mercy is much prized. When enemies are more than the hairs of our head, they are yet to be numbered, but God's mercies are altogether innumerable, and let it never be forgotten that every one of them is an available and powerful argument in the hand of faith. "*In the truth of thy salvation.*" Jehovah's faithfulness is a further mighty plea. His salvation is no fiction, no mockery, no changeable thing, therefore he is asked to manifest it, and make all men see his fidelity to his promise. Our Lord teaches us here the sacred art of wrestling in prayer, and ordering our cause with arguments; and he also indicates to us that the nature of God is the great treasury of strong reasons, which shall be to us most prevalent in supplication.

14. "*Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink.*" He turns into prayer the very words of his complaint; and it is well, if, when we complain, we neither feel nor say anything which we should fear to utter before the Lord as a prayer. We are allowed to ask for deliverance from trouble as well as for support under it; both petitions are here combined. How strange it seems to hear such language from the Lord of glory. "*Let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.*" Both from his foes, and the griefs which they caused him, he seeks a rescue. God can help us in all ways, and we may, therefore, put up a variety of requests without fear of exceeding our liberty to ask, or his ability to answer.

15. "*Let not the waterflood overflow me.*" He continues to recapitulate the terms of his lament. He is willing to bear suffering, but entreats grace that it may not get the victory over him. He was heard in that he feared. "*Neither let the deep swallow me up.*" As Jonah came forth again, so let me also arise from the abyss of woe: here also our Lord was heard, and so shall we be. Death itself must disgorge us. "*Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.*" When a great stone was rolled over the well, or pit, used as a dungeon, the prisoner was altogether enclosed, and forgotten like one in the oubliettes of the Bastille; this is an apt picture of the state of a man buried alive in grief and left without remedy; against this the great sufferer pleaded and was heard. He was baptised in agony but not drowned in it; the grave enclosed him, but before she could close her mouth he had burst his prison. It is said that truth lies in a well, but it is assuredly an open well, for it walks abroad in power; and so our great Substitute in the pit of woe and death was yet the Conqueror of death and hell. How appropriately may many of us use this prayer. We deserve to be swept away as with a flood, to be drowned in our sins, to be shut up in hell; let us, then, plead the merits of our Saviour, lest these things happen unto us.

16. "*Hear me, O Lord.*" Do not refuse thy suppliant Son. It is to the covenant God, the ever-living Jehovah, that he appeals with strong cryings. "*For thy lovingkindness is good.*" By the greatness of thy love have pity upon thine afflicted. It is always a stay to the soul to dwell upon the pre-eminence and excellence of the Lord's mercy. It has furnished sad souls much good cheer to take to pieces that grand old Saxon word, which is here used in our version, "*lovingkindness.*" Its composition is of two most sweet and fragrant things, fitted to inspire strength into the fainting, and make desolate hearts sing for joy. "*Turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.*" If the Lord do but turn the eye of pity, and the hand of power, the mourner's spirit revives. It is the gall of bitterness to be without the comfortable smile of God; in our Lord's case his grief culminated in "Lama Sabachthani," and his bitterest cry was that in which he mourned an absent God. Observe how he dwells anew upon divine tenderness, and touches again that note of abundance, "The multitude of thy compassions."

17. "*And hide not thy face from thy servant.*" A good servant desires the light of his master's countenance; that *servus servorum*, who was also *rex regum*, could not bear to lose the presence of his God. The more he loved

his Father, the more severely he felt the hiding of his face. "*For I am in trouble.*" Stay thy rough wind in the day of thine east wind; do not add sorrow upon sorrow. If ever a man needs the comforting presence of God it is when he is in distress; and, being in distress, it is a reason to be pleaded with a merciful God why he should not desert us. We may pray that our flight be not in the winter, and that God will not add spiritual desertion to all our other tribulations. "*Hear me, speedily.*" The case was urgent, delay was dangerous, nay deadly. Our Lord was the perfection of patience, yet he cried urgently for speedy mercy; and therein he gives us liberty to do the same, so long as we add, "nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

18. "*Draw nigh unto my soul.*" The near approach of God is all the sufferer needs; one smile of heaven will still the rage of hell. "*And redeem it.*" It shall be redemption to me if thou wilt appear to comfort me. This is a deeply spiritual prayer, and one very suitable for a deserted soul. It is in renewed communion that we shall find redemption realised. "*Deliver me because of mine enemies,*" lest they should, in their vaunting, blaspheme thy name, and boast that thou art not able to rescue those who put their trust in thee. Jesus, in condescending to use such supplications, fulfils the request of his disciples: "Lord, teach us to pray."

19 Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries *are* all before thee.

20 Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked *for some* to take pity, but *there was* none; and for comforters, but I found none.

21 They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

Here we have a sad recapitulation of sorrows, with more especial reference to the persons concerned in their infliction.

19. "*Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour.*" It is no novelty or secret, it has been long continued: thou, O God, hast seen it; and for thee to see the innocent suffer is an assurance of help. Here are three words piled up to express the Redeemer's keen sense of the contempt poured upon him; and his assurance that every form of malicious despite was observed of the Lord. "*Mine adversaries are all before thee.*" The whole lewd and loud company is now present to thine eye: Judas and his treachery; Herod and his cunning; Caiaphas and his counsel; Pilate and his vacillation; Jews, priests, people, rulers, all, thou seest and wilt judge.

20. "*Reproach hath broken my heart.*" There is no hammer like it. Our Lord died of a broken heart, and reproach had done the deed. Intense mental suffering arises from slander; and, in the case of the sensitive nature of the immaculate Son of Man, it sufficed to lacerate the heart till it broke. "Then burst his mighty heart." "*And I am full of heaviness.*" Calumny and insult bowed him to the dust; he was sick at heart. The heaviness of our Lord in the garden is expressed by many and forcible words in the four gospels, and each term goes to show that the agony was beyond measure great; he was filled with misery, like a vessel which is full to the brim. "*And I looked for some to take pity, but there was none.*" "Deserted in his utmost need by those his former bounty fed" Not one to say him a kindly word, or drop a sympathetic tear. Amongst ten thousand foes there was not one who was touched by the spectacle of his misery; not one with a heart capable of humane feeling towards him. "*And for comforters, but I found none.*" His dearest ones had sought their own safety, and left their Lord alone. A sick man needs comforters, and a persecuted man needs sympathy; but our blessed Surety found neither on that dark and doleful night when the powers of darkness had their hour. A spirit like that

of our Lord feels acutely desertion by beloved and trusted friends, and yearns for real sympathy. This may be seen in the story of Gethsemane:—

> "Backwards and forwards thrice he ran,
> As if he sought some help from man;
> Or wish'd, at least, they would condole—
> 'Twas all they could—his tortur'd soul.
>
> Whate'er he sought for, there was none;
> Our Captain fought the field alone.
> Soon as the chief to battle led,
> That moment every soldier fled."

21. "*They gave me also gall for my meat.*" This was the sole refreshment cruelty had prepared for him. Others find pleasure in their food, but his taste was made to be an additional path of pain to him. "*And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*" A criminal's draught was offered to our innocent Lord, a bitter portion to our dying Master. Sorry entertainment had earth for her King and Saviour. How often have our sins filled the gall-cup for our Redeemer? While we blame the Jews, let us not excuse ourselves.

22 Let their table become a snare before them: and *that which should have been* for *their* welfare, *let it become* a trap.

23 Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.

24 Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.

25 Let their habitation be desolate; *and* let none dwell in their tents.

26 For they persecute *him* whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.

27 Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness.

28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.

From this point David and our Lord for awhile part company, if we accept the rendering of our version. The severe spirit of the law breathes out imprecations, while the tender heart of Jesus offers prayers for his murderers. The whole of these verses, however, may be viewed as predictions, and then they certainly refer to our Lord, for we find portions of them quoted in that manner by the apostle in Rom. xi. 9, 10, and by Christ himself in Matt. xxiii. 38.

22. "*Let their table become a snare before them.*" There they laid snares, and there they shall find them. From their feasts they would afford nothing but wormwood for their innocent victim, and now their banquets shall be their ruin. It is very easy for the daily provisions of mercy to become temptations to sin. As birds and beasts are taken in a trap by means of baits for the appetite, so are men snared full often by their meats and drinks. Those who despise the upper springs of grace, shall find the nether springs of worldly comfort prove their poison. The table is used, however, not alone for feeding, but for conversation, transacting business, counsel, amusement, and religious observance: to those who are the enemies of the Lord Jesus the table may, in all these respects, become a snare. This first plague is terrible, and the second is like unto it. "*And that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.*" This, if we follow the original closely, and the version of Paul in the Romans, is a repetition of the former phrase; but we shall not err if we say that, to the rejecters of Christ, even those things which are calculated to work their spiritual and eternal good, become occasions for yet greater sin. They

reject Christ, and are condemned for not believing on him; they stumble on this stone, and are broken by it. Wretched are those men, who not only have a curse upon their common blessings, but also on the spiritual opportunities of salvation.

"Whom oils and balsams kill, what salve can cure?"

This second plague even exceeds the first.

23. "*Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not.*" They shall wander in a darkness that may be felt. They have loved darkness rather than light, and in darkness they shall abide. Judicial blindness fell upon Israel after our Lord's death and their persecution of his apostles; they were blinded by the light which they would not accept. Eyes which see no beauty in the Lord Jesus, but flash wrath upon him, may well grow yet more dim, till death spiritual leads to death eternal. "*And make their loins continually to shake.*" Their conscience shall be so ill at ease that they shall continually quiver with fear; their backs shall bend to the earth (so some read it) with grovelling avarice, and their strength shall be utterly paralyzed, so that they cannot walk firmly, but shall totter at every step. See the terrifying, degrading, and enfeebling influence of unbelief. See also the retaliations of justice: those who will not see shall not see; those who would not walk in uprightness shall be unable to do so.

24. "*Pour out thine indignation upon them.*" What can be too severe a penalty for those who reject the incarnate God, and refuse to obey the commands of his mercy? They deserve to be flooded with wrath, and they shall be; for upon all who rebel against the Saviour, Christ the Lord, "the wrath is come to the uttermost." 1 Thess. ii. 16. God's indignation is no trifle; the anger of a holy, just, omnipotent, and infinite Being, is above all things to be dreaded; even a drop of it consumes, but to have it poured upon us is inconceivably dreadful. O God, who knoweth the power of thine anger?

"*And let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.*" Grasping them, arresting them, abiding on them. If they flee, let it overtake and seize them; let it lay them by the heels in the condemned cell, so that they cannot escape from execution. It shall indeed be so with all the finally impenitent, and it ought to be so. God is not to be insulted with impunity; and his Son, our ever gracious Saviour, the best gift of infinite love, is not to be scorned and scoffed at for nothing. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, but what shall be the "sorer punishment" reserved for those who have trodden under foot the Son of God?

25. "*Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.*" This may signify that their posterity shall be cut off, and the abode which they occupy shall be left a ruin; or, as our Lord quoted it, it refers to the temple, which was left by its divine occupant, and became a desolation. What occurs on a large scale to families and nations is often fulfilled in individuals, as was conspicuously the case with Judas, to whom Peter referred this prophecy, Acts i. 20, "For it is written in the book of Psalms, let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein." The fierce proclamation of Nebuchadnezzar, "that every people, nation, and language, that speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill," is but an anticipation of that dread hour when the enemies of the Lord shall be broken in pieces, and perish out of the land.

26. "*For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten.*" They are cruel where they should be pitiful. When a stroke comes to me in the providence of God, their friends gather around them and condole, but these wretches hunt the wounded and vex the sick. Their merciless hearts invent fresh blows for him who is "smitten of God and afflicted." "*And they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.*" They lay bare the wounds with their rough tongues. They lampoon the mourner, satirise his sorrows, and deride his woes. They pointed to the Saviour's wounds, they looked and stared upon him, and then they uttered shameful accusations against him. After this

fashion the world still treats the members of Christ. "Report," say they, "and we will report it." If a godly man be a little down in estate, how glad they are to push him over altogether, and, meanwhile, to talk everywhere against him. God takes note of this, and will visit it upon the enemies of his children; he may allow them to act as a rod to his saints, but he will yet avenge his own elect. "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Zion, with a great jealousy; and I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction."

27. "*Add iniquity unto their iniquity.*" Unbelievers will add sin to sin, and so, punishment to punishment. This is the severest imprecation, or prophecy, of all. For men to be let alone to fill up the measure of their iniquity, is most equitable, but yet most awful. "*And let them not come into thy righteousness.*" If they refuse it, and resist thy gospel, let them shut themselves out of it.

> "He that will not when he may,
> When he would he shall have nay."

Those who choose evil shall have their choice. Men who hate divine mercy shall not have it forced upon them, but (unless sovereign grace interpose) shall be left to themselves to aggravate their guilt, and ensure their doom.

28. "*Let them be blotted out of the book of the living.*" Though in their conceit they wrote themselves among the people of God, and induced others to regard them under that character, they shall be unmasked and their names removed from the register. Enrolled with honour, they shall be erased with shame. Death shall obliterate all recollection of them; they shall be held no longer in esteem, even by those who paid them homage. Judas first, and Pilate, and Herod, and Caiaphas, all in due time, were speedily wiped out of existence; their names only remain as by-words, but among the honoured men who live after their departure they are not recorded. "*And not be written with the righteous.*" This clause is parallel with the former, and shows that the inner meaning of being blotted out from the book of life is to have it made evident that the name was never written there at all. Man in his imperfect copy of God's book of life will have to make many emendations, both of insertion and erasure; but, as before the Lord, the record is for ever fixed and unalterable. Beware, O man, of despising Christ and his people, lest thy soul should never partake in the righteousness of God, without which men are condemned already.

29 But I *am* poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.

30 I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.

31 *This* also shall please the LORD better than an ox *or* bullock that hath horns and hoofs.

32 The humble shall see *this, and* be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God.

33 For the LORD heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners.

34 Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein.

35 For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession.

36 The seed also of his servants shall inherit it: and they that love his name shall dwell therein.

Imprecations, prophecies, and complaints are ended, and prayer of a milder

sort begins, intermingled with bursts of thankful song, and encouraging foresights of coming good.

29. "*But I am poor and sorrowful.*" The psalmist was afflicted very much, but his faith was in God. The poor in spirit and mourners are both blessed under the gospel, so that here is a double reason for the Lord to smile on his suppliant. No man was ever poorer or more sorrowful than Jesus of Nazareth, yet his cry out of the depths was heard, and he was uplifted to the highest glory. "*Let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.*" How fully has this been answered in our great Master's case, for he not only escaped his foes personally, but he has become the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him, and this continues to glorify him more and more. O ye poor and sorrowful ones, lift up your heads, for as with your Lord so shall it be with you. You are trodden down to-day as the mire of the streets, but you shall ride upon the high places of the earth ere long; and even now ye are raised up together, and made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.

30. "*I will praise the name of God with a song.*" He who sang after the passover, sings yet more joyously after the resurrection and ascension. He is, in very truth, "the sweet singer of Israel." He leads the eternal melodies, and all his saints join in chorus. "*And will magnify him with thanksgiving.*" How sure was our Redeemer of ultimate victory, since he vows a song even while yet in the furnace. In us, also, faith foresees the happy issue of all affliction, and makes us even now begin the music of gratitude which shall go on for ever increasing in volume, world without end. What clear shining after the rain we have in this and succeeding verses. The darkness is past, and the glory light shines forth as the sun. All the honour is rendered unto him to whom all the prayer was presented; he alone could deliver and did deliver, and, therefore, to him only be the praise.

31. "*This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.*" No sacrifice is so acceptable to God, who is a Spirit, as that which is spiritual. He accepted bullocks under a dim and symbolical dispensation; but in such offerings, in themselves considered, he had no pleasure. "Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?" Here he puts dishonour upon mere outward offerings by speaking of the horns and hoofs, the offal of the victim. The *opus operatum*, which our ritualists think so much of, the Lord puffs at. The horning and hoofing are nothing to him, though to Jewish ritualists these were great points, and matters for critical examination; our modern rabbis are just as precise as to the mingling of water with their wine, the baking of their wafers, the cut of their vestments, and the performance of genuflections towards the right quarter of the compass. O fools, and slow of heart to perceive all that the Lord has declared. "Offer unto God thanksgiving" is the everlasting rubric of the true directory of worship. The depths of grief into which the suppliant had been plunged gave him all the richer an experience of divine power and grace in his salvation, and so qualified him to sing more sweetly "the song of loves." Such music is ever most acceptable to the infinite Jehovah.

32. "*The humble shall see this, and be glad.*" Grateful hearts are ever on the look out for recruits, and the rejoicing psalmist discerns with joy the fact, that other oppressed and lowly men observing the Lord's dealings with his servants are encouraged to look for a like issue to their own tribulations. The standing consolation of the godly is the experience of their Lord, for as he is so are we also in this world; yea, moreover, his triumph has secured ours, and therefore, we may on the most solid grounds rejoice in him. This gave our great leader satisfaction as he foresaw the comforts which would flow to us from his conflict and conquest. "*And your heart shall live that seek God.*" A similar assurance is given in Psalm xxii., which is near akin to this. It would have been useless to seek if Jesus' victories had not cleared the way, and opened a door of hope; but, since the Breaker has gone up before us, and the King at the head of us, our hope is a living one, our faith is living, our love is

living, and our renewed nature is full of a vitality which challenges the cold hand of death to damp it.

33. "*For the Lord heareth the poor.*" The examples of David and David's Lord, and tens of thousands of the saints, all go to prove this. Monarchs of the nations are deaf to the poor, but the Sovereign of the Universe has a quick ear for the needy. None can be brought lower than was the Nazarene, but see how highly he is exalted: descend into what depths we may, the prayer-hearing God can bring us up again. "*And despiseth not his prisoners.*" Poor men have their liberty, but these are bound; however, they are God's prisoners, and, therefore, prisoners of hope. The captive in the dungeon is the lowest and least esteemed of men, but the Lord seeth not as man seeth; he visited those who are bound with chains, and proclaims a jail-delivery for his afflicted. God despises no man, and no prayer that is honest and sincere. Distinctions of rank are nothing with him; the poor have the gospel preached to them, and the prisoners are loosed by his grace. Let all poor and needy ones hasten to seek his face, and to yield him their love.

34. "*Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein.*" The doxology of a glowing heart. The writer had fathomed the deeps, and had ascended to the heights; and, therefore, calls on the whole range of creation to bless the Lord. Our Well-Beloved here excites us all to grateful adoration: who among us will hold back? God's love to Christ argues good to all forms of life; the exaltation of the Head brings good to the members, and to all in the least connected with him. Inasmuch as the creation itself also is by Christ's work to be delivered from bondage, let all that have life and motion magnify the Lord. Glory be unto thee, O Lord, for the sure and all-including pledge of our Surety's triumph: we see in this the exaltation of all thy poor and sorrowful ones, and our heart is glad.

35. "*For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah.*" Poor, fallen Israel shall have a portion in the mercy of the Lord; but, above all, the church, so dear to the heart of her glorious bridegroom, shall be revived and strengthened. Ancient saints so dearly loved Zion, that even in their distresses they did not forget her; with the first gleam of light which visited them, they fell to pleading for the faithful: see notable instances of this which have passed under our eye already. Psalms v. 11, xiv. 7, xxii. 23, li. 18. To us, in these modern times, it is the subject of cheering hope that better days are coming for the chosen people of God, and for this we would ever pray. O Zion, whatever other memories fade away, we cannot forget thee. "*That they may dwell there, and have it in possession.*" Whatever captivities may occur, or desolations be caused, the land of Canaan belongs to Israel by a covenant of salt, and they will surely repossess it; and this shall be a sign unto us, that through the atonement of the Christ of God, all the poor in spirit shall enjoy the mercies promised in the covenant of grace. The sure mercies of David shall be the heritage of all the seed.

36. "*The seed also of his servants shall inherit it.*" Under this image, which, however, we dare not regard as a mere simile, but as having in itself a literal significance, we have set forth to us the enrichment of the saints, consequent upon the sorrow of their Lord. The termination of this Psalm strongly recalls in us that of the twenty-second. The *seed* lie near the Saviour's heart, and their enjoyment of all promised good is the great concern of his disinterested soul. Because they are his Father's servants, therefore he rejoices in their welfare. "*And they that love his name shall dwell therein.*" He has an eye to the Father's glory, for it is to his praise that those who love him should attain, and for ever enjoy, the utmost happiness. Thus a Psalm, which began in the deep waters, ends in the city which hath foundations. How gracious is the change. Hallelujah.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—"*To the Chief Musician, on the lilies, of David.*" "*On the lilies,*" points to the beauty of the subject treated of.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Whole Psalm.—The subject of the Psalm is an ideal person, representing the whole class of religious sufferers. The only individual in whom the various traits meet is Christ. That he is not, however, the exclusive, or even the immediate subject, is clear from the confession in verse 5. There is no Psalm, except the twenty-second, more distinctly applied to him in the New Testament.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Whole Psalm.—This has usually been regarded as a Messianic Psalm. No portion of the Old Testament Scriptures is more frequently quoted in the New, with the exception of Psalm xxii. When Jesus drives the buyers and sellers from the temple (John ii. 17), his disciples are reminded of the words of verse 9 (first clause). When it is said (John xv. 25) that the enemies of Jesus hated him without a cause, and this is looked upon as the fulfilment of Scripture, the reference is probably to verse 4, though it may be also to xxxv. 18. To him, and the reproach which he endured for the sake of God, St. Paul refers the words of this Psalm, verse 9 (second clause): "The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me." In verse 12 we have a foreshadowing of the mockery of our Lord by the soldiers in the prætorium (Matt. xxvii. 27—30); in verse 21, the giving of the vinegar and the gall found their counterpart in the scenes of the crucifixion, Matt. xxvii. 34. In John xix. 28 there is an allusion, probably to verse 21 of this Psalm, and to xxii. 15. The imprecation in verse 25 is said, in Acts i. 20, to have been fulfilled in the case of Judas Iscariot, though, as the words of the Psalm are plural, the citation is evidently made with some freedom. According to Rom. xi. 9, 10, the rejection of Israel may best be described in the words of verses 22, 23.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Whole Psalm.—This Psalm follows in striking connection with the preceeding, and in contrast with the glory of his kingdom. The two have been compared to the transfiguration on the mount, where, after the manifestation of Christ in glory, there appeared, also, Moses and Elias, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. The clearest anticipation of future glory must not shut out the conviction, that it is through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom.—*W. Wilson.*

Whole Psalm.—Remember this is the fourth Psalm which declares at length the passion and resurrection of our Lord. Through the whole Psalm Christ speaks in person. He prays for deliverance by the Father, because he has suffered by the Jews, without cause, many afflictions and persecutions. He supplicates on behalf of his members, that the hope of the faithful resting on his resurrection, may not be disappointed. By the power of his prescience he declares the future events which should occur to his enemies.—*Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus, circa* 468—560.

Whole Psalm.—In this Psalm the whole Christ speaks; now in his own person, now crying with the voice of his members to God his Father.—*Gerhohus.*

Verse 1.—"*Save me, O God.*" Let his distances be never so great, he is resolved to cry after the Lord; and if he get but his head never so little above water, the Lord shall hear of him. One would think his discouragements such as he were past crying any more; *the waters entered into his soul, in deep waters, the streams running over him: he sticketh fast in the mire where is no standing* (he is at the very bottom, and there fast in the mire), *he is weary of crying;* yet, verses 6, 13: *But, Lord, I make my prayer to thee:* and as he recovers breath, so breathes out fresh supplications to the Lord. If men or devils would be forbidding to pray, as the multitude sometimes did the poor blind man to cry

after Jesus; yet, as he, so an importunate suppliant "*will cry so much the more*, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me." Mark x. 47, 48.—*Thomas Cobbet.*

Verse 1.—"*The waters are come in unto my soul.*" What means he by *coming in unto his soul?* Surely no other than this:—that they oppressed his spirit, and, as it were, penetrated into his conscience, raising fears and perplexities there, by reason of his sins, which at present put his faith and hope to some disorder; so that he could not for a while see to the comfortable end of his affliction, but was as one under water, covered with his fears, as appears by what follows (verse 2): "*I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing.*" He compares himself to one in a quagmire that can feel no ground to bear him up; and, observe whence his trouble rose, and where the waters made their entrance (verse 5). "*O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.*" This holy man lay under some fresh guilt, and this made him so uncomfortable under his affliction, because he saw his sin in the face of that, and tasted some displeasure from God for it in his outward trouble, which made it so bitter in the going down; and, therefore, when once he had humbled himself by confessing his sin, and was able to see the coast clear between heaven and him, so as to believe the pardon of his sin, and hope for good news from God again, he then returns to his sweet temper, and sings in the same affliction, where before he sunk.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 2.—"*I sink in deep mire.*" I was taking a quiet walk along the banks [of the Nile], when I came to a part so soft and miry that I was brought to a stand, as my foot sank at every step. . . . . Being brought to a stand, I hailed the reis to heave to, and take me on board. One of the men was, therefore, sent in the small boat; but the river, near the western side, was so shallow that he could not get the boat within some distance of the bank. He, consequently, as is usual in such cases, jumped overboard that he might carry me to the boat on his back. No sooner, however, had he sprung from the boat than I heard him scream. I turned to see what was the matter, when I found him struggling in the mud. He was sinking as though in quicksand; and the more he struggled, the faster and deeper he sank. His fellow-boatmen were not slack. They quickly saw the dilemma he was in, and two of them dashed into the water and swam to the small boat. I was almost choked with terror, and I breathed, or rather gasped, with difficulty. "Can they reach the poor fellow?" I said to myself; "if not, he must inevitably be swallowed up alive!" Now they reach the boat! Now they near him! And now, praise the Lord, he grasps firmly hold. O that death-like grasp of the side of the boat! But this was not until he had sunk up to his bosom! Seeing him safe, I breathed more freely; and I feel that now, though only relating the circumstance, the excitement has caused an increased and painful action of the heart. How I thought of poor David! Had he really witnessed a similar scene to this literally when, speaking of the feelings of his soul, spiritually, he said: "*I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me*"? O what an agonising state to be in! and yet many of my readers, I have no doubt, who never witnessed such a scene literally, know something about it spiritually, as David did, whether he had seen it with his bodily eyes or not. Well might he, in the struggling of his soul, exclaim: "*Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink!*" Let me grasp firmly hold of the ark, and be pulled safely on board! Well! just at the right time, just before the poor fellow's arms (shall I say his arms of faith?) were disabled, swallowed up, deliverance came.—*John Gadsby, in "My Wanderings."*

Verse 2.—"*I sink,*"—"*there is no standing.*" I saw indeed there was cause of rejoicing for those that held to Jesus; but as for me, I had cut myself off by my transgressions, and left myself neither foot-hold, nor hand-hold, amongst all the stays and props in the precious word of life. And truly I did now feel myself to sink into a gulf, as an house whose foundation is destroyed; I did

liken myself, in this condition, unto the case of a child that was fallen into a mill-pit, who, though it could make some shift to scrabble and sprawl in the water, yet, because it could find neither hold for hand nor foot, therefore, at last, it must die in that condition.—*John Bunyan.*

Verse 2.—"*Mire.*" If the abyss be only full of water, a good swimmer has still the hope of rising again to the surface.—*The Berleb. Bible.*

Verse 2.—"*Where the floods overflow me.*" The plea in effect is thus: Lord, I am ready to drown; if ever thou wouldst save a poor perishing servant of thine, save me: my troubles and temptations are too deep for me, I am ready to sink over head and ears in them, and therefore, Lord, reach hither thy gracious hand, and bear up my head above water, lest otherwise I miscarry. Especially if such extremities continue, the continuance of them may be pleaded.—*Thomas Cobbet.*

Verse 2.—"*The floods overflow me.*" The word *flood* in these two verses is the well-known Shibboleth which the Ephraimites were unable to pronounce. Jud. xii. 6. It occurs again, Isaiah xxvii. 12, "flood of the river."—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 3.—"*I am weary of my crying.*" The word יָגַע means properly, *to gape, to gasp*, then, *to become weary*. . . . . but, *to gasp in his crying*, is not so much to grow weary because of the great vehemence thereof, but while the crying lasts, and while he is in the act, to succumb under the burden of his dangerous and shameful calamity.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 3.—"*I am weary of my crying.*" He had cried to God for the ways of man; he had cried to man of the ways of God; he had not ceased, from his first beginning to teach, till he said upon the cross, "I thirst." His eyes had grown dim, and his flesh was faint and weary with his sufferings, through the long passion of his life on earth. He had been waiting in poverty, and insult, and treachery, and scourging, and pain, until he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—*From "A Plain Commentary."*

Verse 3.—"*I am weary of my crying,*" etc. David is like the post, who layeth by three horses as breathless; his heart, his throat, his eyes. . . . . *Objection.* But I have neither weeping one way or other, ordinary nor marred. *Answer.* Looking up to heaven, lifting up of the eyes, goeth for prayer also in God's books. "My prayer unto thee, and will look up," (Psalm v. 3). "*Mine eyes fail with looking upward*" (Psalm lxix. 3). Because, first, prayer is a pouring out of the soul to God, and faith will come out at the eye, in lieu of another door: often affections break out at the window, when the door is closed; as smoke venteth at the window, when the chimney refuseth passage. Stephen looked up to heaven (Acts vii. 55). He sent a post; a greedy, pitiful, and hungry look up to Christ, out at the window, at the nearest passage, to tell that a poor friend was coming up to him. Second. I would wish no more, if I were in hell, but to send a look up to heaven. There be many love-looks of the saints, lying up before the throne, in the bosom of Christ. The twinkling of thy eyes in prayer are not lost to Christ; else Stephen's look, David's look, should not be registered so many hundred years in Christ's written Testament.—*Samuel Rutherford, in "The Trial and Triumph of Faith."*

Verse 3.—"*Crying.*" Meanwhile, we see how the saints, in the vicissitudes of affairs, even when they are innocent, are not insensible and stony; they do not despise the threatening perils; they become anxious, they cry and sigh during their temptations.—*Musculus.*

Verse 3.—"*Mine eyes fail.*" O pitiable sight! that that sight should fail, by which Jesus saw the multitudes and, therefore, ascended the mount to give the precepts of the New Testament; by which, beholding Peter and Andrew, he called them; by which, looking upon the man sitting at the receipt of custom, he called and made him an evangelist; by which, gazing upon the city, he wept over it. . . . With these eyes thou didst look upon Simon, when

thou didst say, "*Thou art the son of Jonas; thou shalt be called Cephas.*" With these eyes thou didst gaze upon the woman who was a sinner, to whom thou didst say, "*Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.*" Turn these eyes upon us, and never turn them away from our continual prayers.—*Gerhohus.*

Verse 3.—"*I wait for my God.*" The hour is coming when our eyes must fail, and be closed; but, even then, "*Let us wait for our God*;" in this respect, let us die the death of the righteous person, who died for us; "and let our last end be like his."—*George Horne.*

Verse 4.—"*Without a cause.*" In suffering, let not the mind be disturbed; for the injustice which is done to the innocent in his sufferings, is not laid to the charge of the sufferer, but to his who inflicts suffering. . . . It is well known what Tertullian relates of Socrates, when his wife met him after his condemnation, and addressed him with a woman's tears: "*Thou art unjustly condemned, Socrates.*" His reply was, "*Wouldst thou have me justly?*"—*Lorinus.*

Verse 4.—"*Then I restored that which I took not away.*" It was the great and blessed work of our Lord Jesus here upon the earth, to restore what he took not away. In handling this: I. Show what is it which was taken away, and from whom? II. Wherein it appears that Christ took it not away. III. How he restored it? IV. Why he did so? V. Use.

I. *What is it which was taken away, and from whom?* 1. There was glory taken from God. Not his essential glory, nor any perfection of his being, for that cannot be taken away; but that glory which shines forth in the moral government of his creatures, and that glory which we are bound to give him. 2. There was righteousness, holiness, and happiness taken from man also. (1) There was a loss of righteousness to the guilty sinner; (2) of holiness to the polluted sinner; (3) of happiness to the miserable sinner. II. *Wherein it appears that Christ did not take away those things from either.* 1. It is plain, as to God, he never took away any glory from him; for he never did anything dishonourable or offensive to God. John viii. 29; Isaiah l. 5; Luke i. 35. 2. It is also clear, as to man, that he took not away any righteousness, holiness, or happiness from him. He was not such a fountain of guilt, pollution, and misery, as the first Adam had been, but the contrary. 3. The Scripture, therefore, speaks of Christ's being cut off, but not for himself, Dan. ix. 26; 1 Pet. iii. 18; Isa. liii. 4, 5. 4. The innocency of Christ was conspicuous in his very sufferings. Though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. Acts xiii. 28. III. *How did Christ restore those things which he took not away?* In general, by his active and passive obedience. 1. Christ's doing the will of God in such a manner as he did it, was a greater honour to God than ever had been, or could be done before. 2. Christ's suffering of the will of God, made a considerable addition to the glory of God, which had been impaired by the sin of man, Heb. v. 8; John xvii. 4; and xiii. 31. 3. Christ hath provided for the justification of the sinner by the obedience which he fulfilled, Rom. v. 8 4. Christ communicates that grace which is necessary for our sanctification also. 5. Christ hath merited for us a present blessedness in this world. 6. Jesus Christ hath procured for us a more full and absolute blessedness in the world to come. IV. *Why did Jesus Christ make it his work to restore what he took not away?* 1. It was a necessary work, a work which must be done, in order to his being a Saviour. 2. It was a work impossible for any mere creature to do; so that if Christ did not, it could not be done by any person besides him.—*Timothy Cruso's Sermon.*

Verse 4.—"*Then I restored that which I took not away.*" Rosenmüller observes, that this seems to be a proverbial sentence, to denote an innocent man unjustly treated. According to the law, if a man stole and killed, or sold an ox, he was to restore five oxen; or a sheep, he was to restore four; and if the ox or sheep was found alive, he was to restore two. Hence, to oblige a man to restore when he had taken nothing, was the greatest injustice. Exod

xxii. 1—5. Ainsworth observes, that though it may be taken for all unjust criminations, whereof David and Christ were innocent, yet in special, it was verified in Christ, who, "being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God," Phil. ii. 6; notwithstanding, for witnessing himself to be the Son of God, he was put to death by the Jews. John xix. 7.—*Benjamin Boothroyd.*

Verse 4.—"*I restored that which I took not away.*" The devil took away by arrogating in heaven what was not his, when he boasted that he was like the Most High, and for this he pays a righteous penalty. . . . Adam also took away what was not his own, when, by the enticement of the devil, "You will be as gods," he sought after a likeness to God, by yielding to the deception of the woman. But the Lord Jesus thought it not robbery to be equal with God. . . . And yet his enemies said, "Let him be crucified, for he hath made himself the Son of God."—*Gerhohus.*

Verse 4.—"*I restored that which I took not away.*" What a blessed verse is here! Amidst all the opposition and contradiction of sinners against himself, Jesus manifested that character, by which Jehovah had pointed him out to the church by the prophet; "Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in." Isaiah lviii. 12. But what was it Christ restored? Nay, all that was lost. Adam by sin had done all that he could to take away God's glory, and with it his own glory and happiness. He had robbed God of his glory, God's law of its due, himself of God's image, and of God's favour. Sin had brought in death, spiritual and eternal; and he and all his descendants stood tremblingly exposed to everlasting misery. All these and more Jesus restored. As man's Surety and man's Representative, and called to it by the authority of Jehovah, the Lord Christ restored to God his glory, and to man God's image of favour; and having destroyed sin, death, hell, and the grave, he restored to his redeemed a better paradise than our nature had lost! Hail! oh, thou blessed Restorer of all our long lost privileges.—*Robert Hawker.*

Verse 5.—"*Thou knowest.*" The knowledge of God is of a double use to pious men. The first is, as we observe in this place, to console the innocent: the second is, to make them circumspect, since all their thoughts, and words, and deeds are under the very eye of God.—*Musculus.*

Verse 5.—"*Thou knowest my offences,*" etc., that is to say, that I am not an offender. This verse is not a confession of sin, but a protestation of innocence. The writer maintains that he is a sufferer, not for his sins, but for his piety. See verses 7, etc.—*George R. Noyes, in "A New Translation of the Book of Psalms, with Notes,"* etc. 1846.

Verse 5.—"*My sins are not hid from thee.*" The sins of those for whom Christ died, by being imputed to him, no doubt became his in the eye of the law, in such a sense as to make him answerable for them. But the Scriptures, be it observed, while they speak of him as "wounded for *our* transgressions, and bruised for *our* iniquities," and as "bearing *our* sins in his own body on the tree," as if afraid to use any forms of expression which would even seem to derogate from his immaculate purity, never speak of the sins of those for whom he died as his *own* sins.—*James Anderson's Note to Calvin in loc.*

Verse 5.—"*My sins are not hid.*" Not as the first Adam, do I, the second Adam, hide myself or my *sins*, especially in thy sight, O God; but lifted up upon the cross I suffered without the gate for *sins* in such a way, that I desire that *my sins* should be conspicuous to every creature in heaven, earth, and hell—*my sins* which, as they refer to my person, are marked with no taint, and, as they pertain to my people believing in me, are blotted out by my blood.—*Gerhohus.*

Verse 6.—"*Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake,*" etc. This says, that unless the carriage and deportment of the godly

man redounds to the comfort of all the rest of the godly, it in some way tends to the discredit of the godly. Since this is the case, when they slip aside, or carry not aright; since they are all in hazard of doing so, it should be matter of affecting and afflicting exercise, lest they do so. Fellow professors are ashamed of the person that walketh not aright; they are ashamed that ever they should have been in company or fellowship with him; they are ashamed that ever such a person should have owned such a cause, and that ever such a thing should have befallen a professor of such a cause; and, besides, they are weakened by him in their hopes of persevering for themselves. Again, they are in hazard of being a discredit to all the godly, because, say they, it seems the Lord has granted no peremptory promise, as to the manner of their final perseverance; and corruption enough remains in them still, to overturn all their stock of grace, if they get not present renewed influences.—*William Guthrie.* 1620—1655.

Verse 6.—"*Ashamed for my sake.*" I pray that they may *not be confounded* by external enemies with their boundless insults and reproaches, because they seem to be the worshippers of a God crucified and dead, and are themselves like dead men, and lie rotting before his sepulchre, as if their good name were gone. Rather let my enemies who do not wish me to live be terror-stricken at my angelic countenance, and fall like the dead.—*Gerhohus.*

Verse 6.—"*For my sake.*" בִּי: more exactly, "*in* me." In these words the voice of the Sponsor of his people's peace is clearly audible. The prayer of the Sufferer has its answer in the declarative testimony which now forms the basis of the gospel: "He that believeth on him shall not be confounded." 1 Peter ii. 6.—*Arthur Pridham.*

Verse 6.—Because I, for their sakes, do at thy command bear that shame which they should else have done, Lord, take it off from them, because thou hast laid it upon me; so it expressly follows, verse 7: "Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face."—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 7.—"*Shame hath covered my face.*" It is a great question whether shame or death be the greater evil. There have been those who have rather chosen death, and have wiped off a dishonour with their blood. So Saul slew himself rather than he would fall into the hands of the Philistines, who would have insulted over him, and mocked him as they did Samson. So that king (Jer. xxxviii. 19) rather chose to lose his country, life, and all, than to be given to the Jews, his subjects, to be mocked of them. . . . Confusion of face is one of the greatest miseries that hell itself is set forth unto us by. There is nothing that a noble nature more abhors than shame, for honour is a spark of God's image; and the more of God's image there is in any one, the more is shame abhorred by him, which is the debasing of it, and so the greater and more noble any one's spirit, the more he avoids it. To a base, low spirit, indeed, shame is nothing; but to a great spirit (as to David), than to have his "glory turned into shame," as Psalm iv. 2, is nothing more grievous. And the greater glory any loseth, the greater is his shame. What must it be then to Christ, who because he was to satisfy God in point of honour debased by man's sin, therefore of all punishments besides, he suffered most of shame; it being also (as was said) one of the greatest punishments in hell. And Christ, as he assumed other infirmities of our nature, that made him passible in other things—as to be sensible of hunger, want of sleep, bodily torments, of unkindnesses, contempt, so likewise of disgrace and shame. He took that infirmity as well as fear; and though he had a strength to bear and despise it (as the author to the Hebrews speaks), yet none was ever more sensible of it. As the delicacy of the temper of his body made him more sensible of pains than ever any man was, so the greatness of his spirit made him more apprehensive of the evil of shame than ever any was. So likewise the infinite love and candour of his spirit towards mankind made him take in with answerable grief the unkindnesses and injuries which they heaped upon him.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 8.—"*A stranger unto my brethren.*" Unless this aversion of his brethren had pained him, he would not have complained of it. It would not have pained him unless he had felt a special affection for them.—*Musculus.*

Verse 8.—In the east where polygamy prevails, the husband is a stern and unfeeling despot; his harem a group of trembling slaves; and the children, while they regard their common father with indifference or terror, cling to their own mother with the fondest affection, as the only part, as the only parent, in whom they feel an interest. Hence it greatly aggravated the affliction of David that he had become "*an alien unto his mother's children:*" the enmity of the other children of his father, the children of his father's other wives, gave him less concern.—*W. Greenfield, in Comprehensive Bible.*

Verse 9.—"*For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.*" He who recollects that the Scriptures speak of a "peace which passeth understanding," and a "joy unspeakable and full of glory," will be more disposed to lament the low state of his own feeling, than to suspect the propriety of sentiments the most rational and scriptural, merely because they rise to a pitch that he has never reached. The Sacred Oracles afford no countenance to the supposition that devotional feelings are to be condemned as visionary and enthusiastic merely on account of their intenseness and elevation; provided they be of the right kind, and spring from legitimate sources, they never teach us to suspect they can be carried too far. David danced before the Lord with all his might, and when he was reproached for degrading himself in the eyes of his people by indulging in such transports, he replied, "If this be vile, I will yet make myself more vile." That the objects which interest the heart in religion are infinitely more durable and important than all others will not be disputed; and why should it be deemed irrational to be affected by them in a degree somewhat suitable to their value?—*Robert Hall.* 1764—1831.

Verse 9.—"*The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.*" Consider the examples of the saints of old, who have taken heaven by force. David broke his sleep for meditation. Psalm cxix. 148. His violence for heaven was boiled up to zeal, Psalm, cxix. 139: "My zeal hath consumed me." And Paul did "*reach forth* (ἐπεκτεινόμενος) unto those things which were before." The Greek word signifies to stretch out the neck, a metaphor taken from racers that strain every limb, and reach forward to lay hold upon the prize. We read of Anna, a prophetess (Luke ii. 37); "she departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." How industrious was Calvin in the Lord's vineyard. When his friends persuaded him for his health's sake to remit a little of his labour, saith he, "Would you have the Lord find me idle when he comes?" Luther spent three hours a day in prayer. It is said of holy Bradford, preaching, reading, and prayer, was his whole life. I rejoice, said bishop Jewel, that my body is exhausted in the labours of my holy calling. How violent were the blessed martyrs! They wore their fetters as ornaments, they snatched up torments as crowns, and embraced the flames as cheerfully as Elijah did the fiery chariot that came to fetch him to heaven. Let racks, fires, pullies, and all manner of torments come, so I may win Christ, said Ignatius. These pious souls "resisted unto blood." How should this provoke our zeal! Write after these fair copies.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 9.—"*The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.*" Zeal in and for true religion is a praise-worthy thing. Was *David* zealous? it may then become a royal spirit. Was *Christ* our Saviour zealous? it may become an heroical spirit. Albeit, zeal is out of grace with most men who sit still, and love to be at quiet rest; yet it is no disgrace to any generous spirit that is regenerate, to have the zeal of God's house to eat him up. It is a slander to call it folly. Was not zealous David wiser than his teachers, than his enemies, than the aged? Lukewarm men call it fury; God's Spirit names it a "live coal," that hath a most vehement flame. Why bears zeal the imputation of indiscretion, rashness, puritanism, or headiness? Was it David's rashness? It was fervency

in religion. Was Christ indiscreet? The wisdom of his Father. Festus called Paul mad, with a loud voice (Acts xxvi. 24), when he spake but words of truth and soberness (verse 25). Christ's kinsmen thought that he was beside himself. Mark iii. 21. Was the judgment of such stolid men any disparagement to our Saviour's zeal? Nay, it is a commendation. To root out evil from, and to establish good in, the house of God is a good thing. Gal. iv. 18. *Thomas Wilson, in "A Sermon preached before sundry of the Honourable House of Commons," entitled, "David's Zeale for Zion."* 1641.

Verse 9.—"*Zeal*," "*reproaches*." Grace never rises to so great a height as it does in times of persecution. Suffering times are a Christian's harvest times. Let me instance in that grace of zeal: I remember Moulin speaking of the French Protestants, saith, "When Papists hurt us for reading the Scriptures, we burn with zeal to be reading of them; but now persecution is over, our Bibles are like old almanacks," etc. All the reproaches, frowns, threatenings, oppositions, and persecutions that a Christian meets with in a way of holiness, do but raise his zeal and courage to a greater height. Michal's scoffing at David did but inflame and raise his zeal: "If this be to be vile, I will be more vile," 2 Sam. vi. 20—22. Look, as fire in the winter burns the hotter, by an *αντιπερισταοις*, because of the coldness of the air; so in the winter of affliction and persecution, that divine fire, the zeal of a Christian, burns so much the hotter, and flames forth so much the more vehemently and strongly. In times of greatest affliction and persecution for holiness' sake, a Christian hath, first, a good captain to lead and encourage him; secondly, a righteous cause to prompt and embolden him; thirdly, a gracious God to relieve and succour him; fourthly, a glorious heaven to receive and reward him; and, certainly, these things cannot but mightily raise him and inflame him under the greatest opposition and persecution. These things will keep him from fearing, fawning, fainting, sinking, or flying in a stormy day; yea, these things will make his face like the face of an adamant, as God promised to make Ezekiel's. Ezekiel iii. 7—9, and Job xli. 24. Now an adamant is the hardest of stones, it is harder than a flint, yea, it is harder than the nether-millstone. The naturalists [Pliny] observe, that the hardness of this stone is unspeakable: the fire cannot burn it, nor so much as heat it through, nor the hammer cannot break it, nor the water cannot dissolve it, and, therefore, the Greeks call it an adamant from its untameableness; and in all storms the adamant shrinks not, it shrinks not, it fears not, it changeth not its hue; let the times be what they will, the adamant is still the same. In times of persecution, a good cause, a good God, and a good conscience will make a Christian like an adamant, it will make him invincible and unchangeable. When one desired to know what kind of man Basil was, there was presented to him in a dream, saith the history, a pillar of fire with this motto, *Talis est Basilius*, Basil is such a one, he is all on a-light fire for God. Persecutions will but set a Christian all on a-light fire for God.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 9.—"*Eaten me up*." The verb means, not only "to eat up, to devour," but "to corrode or consume," by separating the parts from each other, as fire. And the radical import of the Hebrew word for "*zeal*" seems to be "to eat into, corrode, as fire." The word, says Parkhurst, is in the Hebrew Bible generally applied to the fervent or ardent affections of the human frame; the effects of which are well known to be ever like those of fire, corroding and consuming. And, accordingly, the poets, both ancient and modern, abound with descriptions of these ardent and consuming affections, taken from fire and its effects.—*Richard Mant.*

Verse 9.—"*Eaten me up*." He who is zealous in his religion, or ardent in his attachments, is said to be eaten up. "Old Mutteo has determined to leave his home for ever; he is to walk barefoot to the Ganges for the salvation of his soul: his zeal has eaten him up."—*J. Roberts' Oriental Illustrations.*

Verse 9.—"*The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me*." We should, if it were possible, labour to wipe off all the reproach of Christ,

and take it upon ourselves that we might rather be spit upon and contemned than Christ. It was a brave speech of Ambrose, "he wished it would please God to turn all the adversaries upon the church upon himself, and let them satisfy their thirst with his blood:" this is a true Christian heart. And, therefore, if it be for our sakes, and we have anything in the business by which Christ is reproached, we should be willing rather to sacrifice ourselves, than that Christ should be reproached; and as Jonah, when he knew that the tempest rose for his sake, says he, "Cast me into the sea;" and so Nazianzen, when contention rose about him, says he, "Cast me into the sea, let me lose my place, rather than the name of Christ should suffer for me."—*Jeremiah Burroughs.*

Verse 10.—"*When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.*" Behold here, virtue is accounted vice; truth, blasphemy; wisdom, folly. Behold, the peace-maker of the world is judged a seditious person; the fulfiller of the law, a breaker of the law; our Saviour, a sinner; our God, a devil. O poor troubled heart! wherefore dost thou weakly wail for any injury or abuse that is offered to thee? God handleth thee no otherwise in this world than he handled his only Son, who hath pledged thee in this bitter potion; not only taking essay thereof, but drinking to thee a full draught. It is not only a comfort, but a glory, to be a partner and fellow-sufferer with Christ, who delighteth also to see in us some representation of himself. Dogs bark not at those whom they know, and with whom they are familiar; but against strangers they usually bark; not always for any hurt which they feel or fear, but commonly by nature or depraved custom. How then canst thou be a stranger to the world, if it doth not molest thee; if it detracteth not from thee?—*Sir John Hayward* (1560—1627), *in "The Sanctuary of a Troubled Soule."*

Verse 10.—There is nothing so well meant, but it may be ill interpreted.—*Simon Patrick.*

Verses 10, 11.—That Christ was derided and scoffed at is plain, from Mark v.; for, when he said, "The girl is not dead, but sleepeth, they laughed him to scorn;" and when he spoke of the necessity of giving alms, "Now, the Pharisees, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided Him." And, in his passion, he was derided by the soldiers, by Herod, by the high priests, and many others.—*Robert Bellarmine.*

Verse 11.—"*I made sackcloth also my garment,*" etc. Though we nowhere read that Jesus put on *sackcloth* on any occasion, yet it is not improbable that he did; besides, the phrase may only intend that he mourned and sorrowed at certain times, as persons do when they put on sackcloth; moreover, as the common garb of his forerunner was raiment of camel's hair, with a leathern girdle; so it is very likely his own was very mean, suitable to his condition, who, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor. "*And I became a proverb to them:*" a by-word; so that, when they saw any person in sackcloth or in vile raiment, behold, such an one looks like Jesus of Nazareth.—*John Gill.*

Verse 11.—"*I became a proverb.*" Two things are usually implied when a man is said to be a by-word. First, that he is in a very low condition: some men are so high that the tongues of the common people dare not climb over them, but where the hedge is low every man goes over. Secondly, that he is in a despised condition; to be a by-word carries a reflexion of disgrace. He that is much spoken of, in this sense, is ill spoken of: and he is quite lost in the opinion of men, who is thus found in their discourse. . . . . Hence, observe, great sufferers in many things of this world, are the common subject of discourses, and often the subject of disgrace. Such evils as few men have felt or seen, all men will be speaking of. Great sorrows, especially if they be the sorrows of great men, are turned into songs, and poetry plays its part with the saddest disasters. . . . . Holy David met with this measure from men in the day of his sorrows: "*When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was*

to my reproach. I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb (or a by-word) *to them.*" In the next verse he tells us in detail who did this: "*They that sit in the gate* (that is, great ones) *speak against me, and I was the song of the drunkard,*" that is, of the common sort.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 12.—"*They that sit in the gate:*" *i.e.*, as it is generally interpreted, the judges or chief persons of the state; for the gates of cities were the places of judicature. But Hilary interprets this of those who sat *to beg* at the gates of the city; which seems a more probable interpretation, better to agree with the design of the psalmist, and to suit with the "*drunkards,*" mentioned in the next clause.—*Samuel Burder.*

Verse 12.—"*They that sit in the gate.*" The magistrates at the gate. Literally, "assessors at the gate;" "judges sitting to determine causes."—*John Mason Good.*

Verse 12.—"*I was the song of the drunkards.*" Holy walking is the *drunkards' song*, as David was; and so preciseness and strictness of walking is ordinarily: the world cannot bear the burning and shining conversations of some of the saints; they are so cuttingly reproved by them, that with those heathens, they curse the sun, that by its shining doth scorch them. It is no new thing; the seed of the serpent did alway persecute the seed of the woman; and he that was born after the flesh, persecuteth him that was born after the spirit; even so it is now, saith the apostle; and so it is now, may we say. Ishmael mocked Isaac, and is it not so still? Or, if it be not so bold a sin as formerly, it is because the times, not sinners' hearts, are changed; they malign them still, watch for their halting: "report, say they, and we will report it."—*John Murcot.*

Verse 12.—"*I was the song of the drunkards.*" When magistrates discountenance true religion, then it becometh a matter of derision to rascals, and to every base villain without controlment, and a table-talk to every tipler. The shame of the cross is more grievous than the rest of the trouble of it: this is the fourth time that the shame of the cross is presented unto God, in these four last verses: "*I was the song of the drunkards;*" after complaining of his being reproached and being *made a proverb.*—*David Dickson.*

Verse 12.—There is a tavern, or profane mirth, in drinking, and roaring, and revelling, and instead of another minstrel, David must be *the song of the drunkards;* nor can the Philistines be merry unless Samson be made the fool in the play (Judges xvi. 25): "Unless they scoff and jeer the ways and servants of God" (as Mr. Greenham saith), "the fools cannot tell how to be merry;" and then the Devil is merry with them for company. But what? Not merry without abusing their host? This some must dearly pay for, when a reckoning is called for; or, they rather called to make it. Then they will be off from their merry pins, and will find that this was very far from being the "Comfort of the Holy Ghost," wherein and whereby that good Spirit and our Comforter was grieved, and holiness scoffed and laughed at.—*Anthony Tuckney* (1599—1670), *in* "*A Good Day Well Improved.*"

Verse 13.—"*But as for me, my prayer,*" etc. The phrase is full of emphasis; *And I, my prayer to thee:* that is, such am I altogether, this is my main occupation; as it is in Psalm cix. 4: *And I, a prayer;* this was my employment, this ever my only refuge, this my present help and remedy.—*Venema.*

Verse 13.—"*An acceptable time.*" All times are not alike. We will not always find admittance at the same rate, with the same ease. As he will not always be chiding, so he will not always be so pleasing neither. We may knock, and knock again, and yet stand without a while; sometimes, so long, till our knees are ready to sink under us, our eyes ready to drop out, as well as drop with expectation, and our hearts ready to break in pieces, while none heareth, or none regardeth. We should have come before, or pitched our coming at a better time. . . . . The prophet David expressly speaks of "*an acceptable*

time " to make our prayers in. And, " To-day if you will hear his voice," in the psalmist, paraphrased by the apostle, " To-day, while it is called to-day," shows there is a set day, or days, of audience with God, wherein he sets himself, as it were, with all readiness to hear and help us—an *accepted time*. And will ye, next, know what it is that makes it so? There are but two things that do. Either God's being in a good or pleasing disposition towards us, or our being in a good and pleasing disposition towards him. Come we but to him in either of these, and we have nicked the time; we are sure to be accepted.—*Mark Frank.* 1613—1664.

Verse 13 —

Heavier the cross, the heartier prayer;
The bruised herbs most fragrant are.
If sky and wind were always fair,
The sailor would not watch the star;
And David's Psalms had ne'er been sung
If grief his heart had never wrung.

—*From the German.*

Verse 15.—Faith in God giveth hope to be helped, and is half a deliverance before the full deliverance come; for the psalmist is now with his head above the water, and not so afraid as when he began the Psalm.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 15.—" *The pit.*" According to Dean Stanley, the word *Beer* here used is always rendered " well," except in this and three other cases. When such wells no longer yielded a full supply of water they were used as prisons, no care being taken to cleanse out the mire remaining at the bottom. The Dean also tells us in the Appendix to his " Sinai and Palestine," that " they have a broad margin of masonry round the mouth, and often a stone filling up the orifice." The rolling of this stone over the mouth of the well was the well's " shutting her mouth;" and the poor prisoner was, to all intents and purposes, buried alive.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 17.—" *Hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble.*" An upright servant, albeit he be troubled for God's cause, and do miss comfort from God; yet will he not change his Master, nor despair of his favour.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 17.—" *Hide not thy face.*" The proper sense of the word סתר, gives the meaning to the phrase, *veil not thy face from thy servant.* In this there is a reference to a king, who, to prevent promiscuous approach to his chamber, spreads a veil before it, and admits to his presence only his minister of high confidence. So in Psalm xxxi. 21. The face of God is his majesty, and his gracious and favourable presence; the *servant* of God is his minister enjoying intimate access, and *to veil the face from him* is to prevent him coming into the presence of God; and, therefore, it belongs to the servant of God to be treated in a widely different manner,—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 17.—" *Thy servant.*" Hide not, he says, from thy servant; as if he should say, such as I am, I am thy servant. It belongs to the Master to take care of his servant, if in peril for his sake. In this same verse he says he is in a strait. In verse 18 he declares that he is in jeopardy of his life.—*Musculus.*

Verse 19.—" *Thou hast known my reproach,*" etc. It is a great deal of comfort that God does take notice of our reproaches; this was the comfort of the psalmist. If a man suffer reproach, and disgrace, and trouble for his friends, while he is abroad from them; O, says he, did my friends know what I suffer, and suffer for them, it would comfort me: if it be comfort to be known, much more when they shall be accounted their own. Christ is acquainted with all the sufferings of every member; and, therefore, do not say, I am a poor creature; who takes notice of my sufferings? Heaven takes notice of your sufferings: Christ takes notice of them better than yourselves.—*Jeremiah Burroughs.*

Verse 20.—"*Reproach hath broken my heart.*" Mental emotions and passions are well known by all to affect the actions of the heart, in the way of palpitation, fainting, etc. That these emotions and passions, when in overwhelming excess, occasionally, though rarely, produce laceration or rupture of the walls of the heart, is stated by most medical authorities who have written on the affections of this organ; and our poets even allude to this effect as an established fact.

"The grief that does not speak,
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break."

But, if ever human heart was riven and ruptured by the mere amount of mental agony that was endured, it would surely, we might even argue, *a priori*, be that of our Redeemer, when, during those dark and dreadful hours on the cross, he, "being made a curse for us," "bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows," and suffered for sin the malediction of God and man, "full of anguish," and now "exceeding sorrowful even unto death." There are theological as well as medical arguments in favour of the opinion that Christ, in reality, died from a ruptured or broken heart. If the various wondrous prophecies and minute predictions in Psalms xxii. and lxix., regarding the circumstances connected with Christ's death, be justly held as literally true, such as, "They pierced my hands and my feet," "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture," etc., why should we regard as merely metaphorical, and not as literally true, also, the declarations in the same Psalms, "*Reproach hath broken my heart*," "*My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels.*"—*Sir James Young Simpson* (1811—1870) *in W. Stroud's "Treatise on the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ.*"

Verse 20.—"*I looked for some to take pity, but there was none.*" Even under ordinary circumstances we yearn for sympathy. Without it, the heart will contract and droop, and shut like a flower in an unkindly atmosphere, but it will open again amidst the sounds of frankness and the scenes of love. When we are in trouble, this want is in proportion still more pressing; and, for the sorrowful heart to feel alone, is a grief greater than nature can sustain. A glance of sympathy seems to help it more than the gift of untold riches; and a loving look, even from a little child who is sorry for us, or a simple word from some homely friend, will sometimes brace the spirit to new exertions, and seem almost to waken life within the grasp of death. —*Charles Stanford, in "Central Truths.*" 1859.

Verse 21.—"*They gave me also gall*," etc. Such are the comforts often administered, by the world, to an afflicted and deserted soul.—*George Horne.*

Verse 21.—"*Gall and vinegar*" are here put together to denote the most unpalatable forms of food and drink. The passion of our Lord was providentially so ordered as to furnish a remarkable coincidence with this verse. The Romans were accustomed to give sour wine, with an infusion of myrrh, to convicts on the cross, for the purpose of deadening the pain. This practice was adhered to in our Saviour's case (Mark xv. 23). Though in itself not cruel, but the contrary, it formed part of the great process of murderous persecution. On the part of the Roman soldiery it may have been an act of kindness; but, considered as an act of the unbelieving Jews, it was giving *gall and vinegar* to one already overwhelmed with anguish. And so Matthew, in accordance with his general method, represents it as a verification of this passage (Matt. xxvii. 34). He does not contradict Mark's account, before referred to, but merely intimates that the wine and myrrh thus offered were to be regarded as identical with the gall and vinegar of this prediction. And, in order to prevent the coincidence from being overlooked, our Lord, before he died, complained of thirst, and vinegar was administered.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 21.—"*Gall for my meat.*" Since the life of sin first began in tasting, contrary to the obedience due to God, the Redeemer of sinners willed to be obedient even unto death, upon the cross, and to end his life, in fulfilment of

the prophecy, with the bitter taste of gall and vinegar, that, in this manner, we, seeing the beginning of our perdition and the end of our redemption, might feel ourselves to be most sufficiently redeemed and most perfectly cured. —*Thomé de Jesu* (1582), *in* "*The Sufferings of Jesus.*"

Verse 21.—"*Vinegar.*" Commentators have frequently remarked the refreshing quality of the Eastern vinegar. I shall not repeat their observations, but rather would ask, why the psalmist prophetically complains of the giving him *vinegar* to drink, in that *deadly thirst*, which, in another Psalm, he describes by the tongue's cleaving to the jaws, if it be so refreshing? Its refreshing quality cannot be doubted; but may it not be replied, that, besides the gall which he mentions, and which ought not to be forgotten, vinegar itself, refreshing as it is, was only made use of by the meanest people? When a *royal* personage has vinegar given him in his thirst, the *refreshment of a slave*, of a *wretched prisoner*, instead of that of a *prince*, he is greatly dishonoured, and may well complain of it as a bitter insult, or represent such insults by this image.

Sweet wines, as appears from the ancient *Eastern* translators of the Septuagint, were chiefly esteemed formerly, for that which our version renders "*royal wine* in abundance, according to the state of the King" (Esth. i. 7.) they translate, "much and *sweet* wine, such as the *King himself* drank." Perhaps, it was with a view to this, that the soldiers offered our Lord *vinegar* (wine that was become very sour), in opposition to that *sweet* wine princes were wont to drink: for Luke tells us that they did this in mockery (ch. xxiii. 36.) "And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar." Medicated wine, to deaden their sense of pain, was wont, we are told, to be given to Jewish criminals, when about to be put to death; but, they gave our Lord vinegar, and that in mockery—in mockery (as they did other things) of his *claim to royalty*. But the force of this does not appear, if we do not recollect the quality of the wines drunk anciently by princes, which, it seems, were of the *sweet* kind.—*Thomas Harmer.*

Verse 22.—The imprecations in this verse and those following it are revolting only when considered as the expression of malignant selfishness. If uttered by God, they shock no reader's sensibilities, nor should they, when considered as the language of an ideal person, representing the whole class of righteous sufferers, and particularly him who, though he prayed for his murderers while dying (Luke xxiii. 34), had before applied the words of this very passage to the unbelieving Jews (Matt. xxiii. 38), as God did afterwards (Rom. xi. 9, 10). The general doctrine of providential retribution, far from being confined to the Old Testament, is distinctly taught in many of our Saviour's parables. See Matt. xxi. 41; xxii. 7; xxiv. 51.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 22.—"*Let their table become a snare.*" *Their table* figuratively sets forth their prosperity, the abundance of all things. It represents peace and security, as in Psalm xxxiii. 5; Job xxvi. 16. It likewise describes mutual friendship, a blending of minds and plans; the emblem and sign whereof *contract* are accustomed to be. Psalm xli. 10; Dan. xi. 27.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 22.—"*Let their table*," etc. One said well, *Licitis perimus omnes*, etc., "Ruin usually ariseth from the use of lawful thing;" there being most danger where it is least suspected. In all our comforts, there is a forbidden fruit, which seemeth fair and tasteth sweet, but which must not be touched.—*Henry Wilkinson* (1675), *in* "*Morning Exercises.*"

Verse 22.—"*Let their table become a snare.*"—Many would have excused themselves from following Christ, in the parable of the feast: some had bought land, some had married wives, and others had bought yokes of oxen, and could not come (Luke xiv. 18—20), that is, an immoderate love of the world hindered them: their lawful enjoyments, from servants, became their idols; they worshipped them more than God, and would not quit them to come to God. But this is recorded to their reproach; and we may herein see the power of self upon the worldly man, and the danger that comes to him by the abuse of lawful things.

What, thy wife dearer to thee than thy Saviour! and thy land and oxen preferred to thy soul's salvation. O beware, that thy comforts prove not snares first, and then curses: to over-rate them, is to provoke him that gave them to take them away again. Come, and follow him that giveth life eternal to the soul.—*William Penn* (1644—1718), *in* "*No Cross, No Crown.*"

Verse 22.—"*Let their table become a snare.*" That is, for a recompense for their inhumanity and cruelty towards me. Michaelis shows how exactly these comminations were fulfilled in the history of the final siege of Jerusalem by the Romans. Many thousands of the Jews had assembled in the city to eat the paschal lamb, when Titus unexpectedly made an assault upon them. In this siege, the greater part of the inhabitants of Jerusalem miserably perished.—*William Walford.*

Verses 22, 23.—Observe the Divine retribution of the Jews. They gave gall and vinegar as food and drink to Christ; and their own spiritual food and drink has become a snare to them. His eyes were blindfolded; their eyes were darkened. His loins were scourged; their loins were made to shake.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verses 23—28.—He denounceth ten plagues, or effects of God's wrath, to come upon them for their wickedness.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 24.—"*Pour out.*" Observe what is denoted by *pouring out.* First, the facility with which God is able, without any labour, to destroy his enemies, as easy is it as to incline a vial full of liquid and pour it out. Secondly, the pouring out denotes the abundance of his anger. Thirdly, that his wrath is sudden, overwhelming, and inevitable. When it drops, one must take care; when it is poured forth, it crushes the thoughtless.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 25.—"*Let their habitation;*"—that is, not only the place where they dwell, but even their very offices and functions, "*be void,*" viz., by thy just taking them away from amongst men; "*and let none,*" viz., of their seed and posterity, "*dwell* in their tents," viz., that they have dwelt in: he meaneth, that he would have them die without heir or issue.—*Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 25.—"*Let none dwell in their tents.*" After the temple itself was taken, or rather turned to ashes, the miserable remnant of the Jewish people begged of Titus that he would permit them to pass through the breaches of the wall with their wives and children, and go into the wilderness—a request which he indignantly refused. (*Josephus.*) So that, literally, "there was no inhabitant for their tents."—*John Mason Good.*

Verse 26.—When David's misery deserved compassion, Shimei's foul mouth loaded him with malediction. Hereof he complained: "*They persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.*" The picking out of such an opportunity doubled his malicious rancour. Such words would have galled at another time, which now are ready to kill. Let an arrow fly against the wind, it will hardly stick upright; with the wind, it pierceth deep. While thine enemy stands, he may ward thy blows; but once fallen on his back, he is at thy mercy: and how base is that spirit which will prey on prostrate fortunes! Little children have so much valour and justice, as to call him a coward that strikes his adversary when he is down. To insult upon those whom God hath humbled, and to draw blood of that back which is yet blue from the Maker's stripes, is even the murder of a virulent tongue. Nor will it be any rare thing at the day of judgment for cursers to be indicted of murder. They would kill if they durst; they do kill as far as they can. I would be loth to trust his hand, that bans one with his lips. Balaam would soon have been the death of all Israel, if either tongue or sword could have effected his will.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 26—"*They talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.*" The

very talking and venting of ill speeches, to the prejudice of Christ's cause and truth, and true holiness in his saints, especially when they are under suffering and afflictions, whatsoever, is a high provocation of God's wrath.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 26.—It were to be wished, that the sorrows of the penitent, when wounded with a sense of sin, never subjected him to the scorn and contempt of those who would be thought Christians.—*George Horne.*

Verse 27.—"*Add iniquity unto their iniquity.*" This is that retaliation of sin which God returns into their bosoms that foster it; that since "they loved cursing, it shall be unto them." Psalm cix. 17. So David here (though it was not in him *precantis votum*, but *prophetantis vaticinium*, he did not desire it to be so, but he knew it would be so), "*Add iniquity unto their iniquity.*" Neither doth God this by infusion of wickedness, but by subtraction of his Spirit. He is *causa deficiens, non efficiens:* as the recalling of the sun from us causeth darkness; so the privation of grace creates the prevalence of ungodliness. It is in him not *peccatum, sed judicum*,—not sin, but judgment. When he leaves us to ourselves, it is no wonder if we fall into horrid and prodigious sins. *Peccatum est malum in se: effectum prioris mali, et causa subsequentis: est et supplicium, et causa supplicii:* Sin is evil in itself, the effect of former evil, the cause of future: it is both punishment itself, and the cause of punishment. In all the storehouse of God's plagues there is not a greater vengeance. With other punishments the body smarteth; the soul groaneth under this. Hence, sins multiply without limits, that the plagues may be without end. Every affliction is sore that offends us; but that is direful which offends God. Such do at once act and suffer: it is both an active and a passive sin. The punishment they suffer is (in them) sin; the sin they do is (from God) a punishment.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 27.—"*Add iniquity unto their iniquity.*" Or, as the original signifies, *perverseness*, treat their *perverseness* with *perverseness:* act, in thy judgments, as *crookedly* towards them as they dealt *crookedly* towards thee. They shall get, in the way of punishment, what they have dealt out in the way of oppression. —*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 27.—"*Add iniquity unto their iniquity.*" Sin, carried far enough, becomes its own punishment. Let but a voracious glutton be bound to sit at a well-furnished table but two hours after he had filled his stomach, he would account it an intolerable penance. Let but the drunkard be forced to drink on with those that can drink him down, how is he a burden to himself, and a scorn to his fellow drunkards! Let but a lazy sluggard be confined three days to his bed, and how weary will he be of his bed of down! How is the idle person more weary of his idleness than another is of work! —*Samuel Annesley* (1620—1696), *in* "*Morning Exercises.*"

Verse 28.—"*Let them be blotted out of the book of the living.*" All the Israelites who came up out of Egypt were put down in a muster-roll of the living, called "the writing of the house of Israel" (Ezek. xiii. 9), and "the book of life." Those who had died were excluded when the names were written out afresh each year. They were, thereby, consigned to oblivion (Prov. x. 7). Hence, *the book of life* was used as an image for God's *book of predestination to eternal life* (Psalm cxxxix. 16; Exod. xxxii. 32; Psalm lxxxvii. 6; Dan. xii. 1; Phil. iv. 3; Rev. xvii. 8; xiii. 8; xxi. 27; Luke x. 20). The book of life, *in the human point of view*, has names written in it who have a name to live, but are dead, being in it only by external call, or in their own estimation, and in that of others. But, *in the divine point of view*, it contains only those who are elected finally to life. The former may be blotted out, as was Judas (Rev iii. 5; Matt. xiii. 12; xxv. 29; vii. 23; Exod. xxxii. 33); but the latter never (Rev. xx. 12, 15; John x. 28, 29; Acts xiii. 48).—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 28.—"*Let them be wiped out,*" etc. This verse alludes to the ancient Jewish practice of recording the names of the inhabitants of every division, or

tribe, of the people, in a volume somewhat similar to the *Dom-boc* of the Saxons. See Luke ii. 1. The names of those who died were blotted or *wiped* out, and appeared no longer on the list of the living. Such a book is attributed to God in Psalm cxxxix. 16: and the *blotting out of Moses from God's book*, in Exod. xxxii. 32, is a figurative expression, for depriving him of life.—*Richard Warner.*

Verse 28.—"*Let them be blotted out of the book of the living*," etc. We come to the question, Whether to be written in heaven be an infallible assurance of salvation; or, whether any there registered may come to be blotted out? The truth is, that none written in heaven can ever be lost; yet they object against it this verse. Hence, they infer, that some names once there recorded are afterwards put out; but this opinion casteth a double aspersion on God himself. Either it makes him ignorant of future things, as if he foresaw not the end of elect and reprobate, and so were deceived in decreeing some to be saved that shall not be saved; or, that his decree is mutable, in excluding those upon their sins whom he hath formerly chosen. From both these weaknesses St. Paul vindicates him (2 Tim. ii. 19): "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." First, "The Lord knows them that are his;" this were not true if God's prescience could be deluded. Then, his "foundation stands sure;" but that were no sure foundation, if those he hath decreed to be his should afterwards fall out not to be his. The very conclusion of truth is this, *impossibilis est deletio;* they which are "written in heaven" can never come into hell. To clear this from the opposed doubt, among many, I will cull out three proper distinctions:—

1. One may be said to be written in heaven *simpliciter*, and *secundum quid*. He that is simply written there, *in quantum prædestinatus ad vitam*, because elected to life, can never be blotted out. He that is written after a sort may, for he is written *non secundum Dei præscientiam, sed secundum præsentem justitiam*—not according to God's former decree, but according to his present righteousness. So they are said to be blotted out, not in respect of God's knowledge, for he knows they never were written there; but according to their present condition, apostatising from grace to sin.*

2. Some are blotted out *non secundum rei veritatem, sed hominum opinionem*—not according to the truth of the thing, but according to men's opinion. It is usual in the Scriptures to say a thing is done *quando innotescat fieri*, when it is declared to be done. Hypocrites have a simulation of outward sanctity, so that men in charity judge them to be written in heaven. But when those glistening stars appear to be only *ignes fatui*, foolish meteors, and fall from the firmament of the church, then we say they are blotted out. The written *ex existentia*, by a perfect being, are never lost; but *ex apparentia*, by a dissembled appearance, may. Some God so writes, *in se ut simpliciter habituri vitam*—that they have life simply in themselves, though not of themselves. Others he so writes, *ut habeant non in se, sed in sua causa;* from which falling they are said to be obliterated.†

3. Augustine says, we must not so take it, that God first writes and then dasheth out. For if a Pilate could say, *Quod scripsi, scripsi*—"What I have written, I have written," and it shall stand; shall God say, *Quod scripsi, expungam*—What I have written, I will wipe out, and it shall not stand? They are written, then, *secundum spem ipsorum, qui ibi se scriptos putabant*—according to their own hope that presumed their names there; and are blotted out *quando ipsis constet illos non ibi fuisse*—when it is manifest to themselves that their names never had any such honour of inscription. This even that Psalm strengthens whence they fetch their opposition: "*Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.*" So that to be blotted out of that book, it is, indeed, never to be written there. To be wiped out in the end, is but a declaration that such were not written in the beginning.—*Thomas Adams.*

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* Lyra. † Aquinas.

Verse 32.—"*Your heart shall live that seek God.*" As such who are poor in spirit, and truly humbled, do live upon God's alms, and are daily at his doors for relief of their necessities, and for communion with his gracious goodness; so shall they thrive well in this trade.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 32.—"*Your heart shall live.*" The *heart*, or the *soul*, is said *to live, to be converted*, or to return, when it is refreshed and cured of its pains and griefs. In this way it could be said of Jacob, when the good tidings were brought, that his *spirit revived*. . . . . On the contrary, when Nabal heard the bad news, it is recorded that *his heart died within him, and he became as a stone.*—*Lorinus.*

Verse 33.—"*The Lord heareth the poor.*" The consolation is much greater when it is said, "The Lord heareth the poor," than if it were written, He hath heard poor David.—*Musculus.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—Our trials like waters. I. They should be kept out of the heart. II. There are, however, leaks which admit them. III. Take note when the hold is filling. IV. Use the pumps, and cry for help.

Verses 2, 3.—The sinner aware of his position, unable to hope, overwhelmed with fear, finding no comfort in prayer, unvisited with divine consolation. Direct and console him.

Verse 3.—I. Here is faith in the midst of trouble: "My God." II. Hope in the midst of disappointment: "Mine eyes fail," etc. III. Prayer in the midst of discouragement: "I am weary," etc.; "My throat," etc.

Or, I. There is praying beyond prayer: "I am weary," etc. II. Hoping beyond hope: "Mine eyes," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 4.—Jesus as the Restorer, the Christian imitating him in the same office; Christianity a power which will do this for the whole race in due season.

Verse 5.—*Our foolishness.* Wherein it appears generally, how it may display itself in individuals, what it occasions, and what are the divine provisions to meet it.

Verse 5.—I. God's knowledge of sin is an inducement to repent. 1. Because it is foolish to endeavour to hide any sin from him. 2. Because it is impossible to confess all our sin to him. II. It is an encouragement to hope for pardon. 1. Because, in the full knowledge of sin, he has declared himself to be merciful and ready to forgive. 2. Because he has made provision for pardon, not according to our knowledge of sin, but his own.—*G. R.*

Verses 8, 9.—I. A grievous trial. II. An honourable reason for it: for Christ's sake. III. Consoling supports under it.

Verse 9.—I. The object of zeal: "thy house;" thy Zion; thy Church. II. The degree of zeal: "hath eaten me up." Our Lord was consumed by his own zeal. So Paul: "And I if I be offered up," etc. III. The manifestation of zeal: "The reproaches," etc.; of thy justice: of thy law; of thy moral government; of thy lovingkindness. "Who himself bare our sins," etc.—*G. R.*

Verses 10–12.—A prophecy. I. Of the Saviour's tears: "When I wept" II. Of his fasting. III. Of reproach. IV. Of his humiliation: "I made sackcloth," etc. V. Of the perversion of his words as, "I will destroy this temple," etc. VI. Of the opposition of the Pharisees and rulers: "They that sit in the gate," etc. VII. Of the contempt of the lowest of the people. "I was the song," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 11.—Proverbial sayings of a scoffing character.

Verse 13. "*An acceptable time.*" While life lasts usually, and especially when we are repentant, feel our need, are importunate, give all glory to God, have faith in his promise, and expect a gracious reply.

Verse 13.—"*Multitude of thy mercy.*" Seen in many forbearances before conversion, countless pardons, innumerable gifts, many promises, frequent visits, and abundant deliverances. Of all these who can count the thousandth part?

Verse 13.—"*The truth of thy salvation.*" An instructive topic. Its reality, certainty, completeness, eternity, etc., all illustrate its *truth* under various aspects.

Verses 14—16.—I. The depth from which prayer may rise. II. The height to which it may ascend. Thus Jonah, when at the bottom of the sea, says, "My prayer came up," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 15 (*last clause*).—A tremendous evil, our desert of it, our hope against it, our fear of it, and the reasons which secure us against it.

Verse 17.—I. Prayer: "Hide not thy face." II. Person: "Thy servant." III. Plea: "For I am in trouble." IV. Pressure: "Hear me speedily."

Verse 19.—I. God knows what his people suffer; how much, how long, from whom, for what. II. His people should find consolation in this knowledge. 1. That trial is permitted by him. 2. That it is apportioned by him. 3. That it has its design from him. 4. That when the design is accomplished, it will be removed by him.—*G. R.*

Verse 20.—The Saviour's broken heart.

Broken hearts, such as are sentimental, caused by disappointed pride, penitence, persecution, sympathy, etc.

Verse 21.—The conduct of men to Jesus throughout his entire life, rendering to him evil for all his good, and where good would have seemed to be the inevitable return.

Verse 22.—*The table a snare.* Excess in feasting; looseness in conversation; want of principle in confederate councils; superstition in religion.

Verse 23.—The judicial curse which falls on some despisers of Christ; their understandings fail to perceive the truth; and they tremble, because they are unable to receive strengthening comforts.

Verse 29.—I. The humiliation that precedes exaltation. 1. Deep: "I am poor and sorrowful." 2. Confessed: "I am poor," etc. II. The exaltation that follows humiliation. 1. Divine: "Thy salvation, O Lord." "Though the Lord be high," etc. 2. Complete: God does nothing by halves. 3. Pre-eminent: "Set me up on high."—*G. R.*

Verses 30, 31.—I. The effect of deliverance upon the people of God. It fills them with praise and thanksgiving. II. The effect in relation to God. He is more pleased with it than with any other offerings: "Whoso offereth praise," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 32.—I. The joy of a good man's heart is in the experience of others. II. The life of his heart is in God.

Verse 33.—I. What the people of God are in their own esteem: "poor" and "prisoners." II. What they are in the divine esteem: not unnoticed; not unheard; not despised.

Verse 34.—"*The sea,*" etc. How God is, should be, and shall be praised by the sea.

Verse 35.—Salvation, edification, preservation, peace, full assurance.

Verses 35, 36.—Observe the sequence:—"Save," "build," "dwell and have," "inherit," "love and dwell."

Verse 36.—I. The sure evidence of grace: "love his name." II. The blessing given. III. The enduring character of it: "shall dwell."

Verse 36.—I. The inheritance: "Inherit it;" we reign with Christ on earth, then in heaven. II. The title. 1. Legal: "Seed of his servants"—Abraham, Jacob, David—David's Lord and Son. 2. Moral: "They that love his name."—*G. R.*

Verse 36.—I. The covenant inheritance. II. To whom it belongs. III. The certainty of their obtaining; and, IV. The perpetuity of their possessing it.

PSALM LXX.

TITLE.—TO the Chief Musician, a Psalm of David.—*So far the title corresponds with Psalm XL., of which this is a copy with variations. David appears to have written the full-length Psalm, and also to have made this excerpt from it, and altered it to suit the occasion. It is a fit pendant to Psalm LXIX., and a suitable preface to Psalm LXXI.* To bring to remembrance. *This is the poor man's memorial David personally pleads with God that he may not be forgotten, but David's Lord may be heard here also. Even if the Lord seems to forget us, we must not forget him. This memorial Psalm acts as a connecting link between the two Psalms of supplicatory expostulation, and makes up with them a precious triad of song.*

EXPOSITION.

[The Reader is referred for full Exposition and Notes to Psalm XL., verses 13—17, in "*Treasury of David*," Vol. II., pp. 267, 268.]

MAKE haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O LORD.

2 Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul: let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt.

3 Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha.

4 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified.

5 But I *am* poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: thou *art* my help and my deliverer; O LORD, make no tarrying.

1. This is the second Psalm which is a repetition of another, the former being Psalm liii., which was a rehearsal of Psalm xiv. The present differs from the Fortieth Psalm at the outset, for that begins with, "Be pleased," and this, in our version, more urgently with, "*Make haste;*" or, as in the Hebrew, with an abrupt and broken cry, "*O God, to deliver me; O Lord, to help me haste.*" It is not forbidden us, in hours of dire distress, to ask for speed on God's part in his coming to rescue us. The only other difference between this and verse 13 of Psalm xl., is the putting of *Elohim* in the beginning of the verse for *Jehovah*, but why this is done, we know not; perhaps, the guesses of the critics are correct, but perhaps they are not. As we have the words of this Psalm twice in the letter, let them be doubly with us in spirit. It is most meet that we should day by day cry to God for deliverance and help; our frailty and our many dangers render this a perpetual necessity.

2. Here the words, "together," and, "to destroy it," which occur in Psalm xl., are omitted: a man in haste uses no more words than are actually necessary. His enemies desired to put his faith to shame, and he eagerly entreats that they may be disappointed, and themselves covered with confusion. It shall certainly be so; if not sooner, yet at that dread day when the wicked shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt. "*Let them be ashamed and*

confounded that seek after my soul: let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt:" turned back and driven back are merely the variations of the translators. When men labour to turn others back from the right road, it is God's retaliation to drive them back from the point they are aiming at.

3. "*Let them be turned back.*" This is a milder term than that used in Psalm xl., where he cries, "let them be desolate." Had growing years matured and mellowed the psalmist's spirit? To be "turned back," however, may come to the same thing as to be "desolate;" disappointed malice is the nearest akin to desolation that can well be conceived. "*For a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha.*" They thought to shame the godly, but it was their shame, and shall be their shame for ever. How fond men are of taunts, and if they are meaningless ahas, more like animal cries than human words, it matters nothing, so long as they are a vent for scorn and sting the victim. Rest assured, the enemies of Christ and his people shall have wages for their work; they shall be paid in their own coin; they loved scoffing, and they shall be filled with it —yea, they shall become a proverb and a by-word for ever.

4. Anger against enemies must not make us forget our friends, for it is better to preserve a single citizen of Zion, than to kill a thousand enemies "*Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee.*" All true worshippers, though as yet in the humble ranks of seekers, shall have cause for joy. Even though the seeking commence in darkness, it shall bring light with it. "*And let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified.*" Those who have tasted divine grace, and are, therefore, wedded to it, are a somewhat more advanced race, and these shall not only feel joy, but shall with holy constancy and perseverance tell abroad their joy, and call upon men to glorify God. The doxology, "Let the Lord's name be magnified," is infinitely more manly and ennobling than the dog's bark of "Aha, aha."

5. "*But I am poor and needy.*" Just the same plea as in the preceding Psalm, verse 29: it seems to be a favourite argument with tried saints; evidently our poverty is our wealth, even as our weakness is our strength. May we learn well this riddle. "*Make haste unto me, O God.*" This is written instead of "yet the Lord thinketh upon me," in Psalm xl.: and there is a reason for the change, since the key note of the Psalm frequently dictates its close. Psalm xl. sings of God's thoughts, and, therefore, ends therewith; but the peculiar note of Psalm lxx. is "Make haste," and, therefore, so it concludes. "*Thou art my help and my deliverer.*" My help in trouble, my deliverer out of it. "*O Lord, make no tarrying.*" Here is the name of "Jehovah" instead of "my God." We are warranted in using all the various names of God, for each has its own beauty and majesty, and we must reverence each by its holy use as well as by abstaining from taking it in vain.

I have presumed to close this recapitulatory exposition with an original hymn, suggested by the watchword of this Psalm, "MAKE HASTE."

Make haste, O God, my soul to bless!
My help and my deliv'rer thou;
Make haste, for I'm in deep distress,
My case is urgent; help me *now*.

Make haste, O God! make haste to save!
For time is short, and death is nigh;
Make haste ere yet I'm in my grave,
And with the lost for ever lie.

Make haste, for I am poor and low;
And Satan mocks my prayers and tears;
O God, in mercy be not slow,
But snatch me from my horrid fears.

Make haste, O God, and hear my cries;
Then with the souls who seek thy face,
And those who thy salvation prize,
I'll magnify thy matchless grace.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—Francke would apply the present Psalm to the state of the Christian church after the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, and would put the words in the mouths of the faithful of that time. On the same ground of transferring the language adapted to Christ in Psalm xl. to the faithful in this Psalm, we need not hesitate to take them on our lips, as the language of the church in every age. I cannot but reassert my conviction of the intentional arrangement of the Psalms in the order in which we now have them, made in all probability, partially at least, at the time they were handed over to public use. It is surely a daring conjecture made by Walford, that the repetition of this Psalm arose from some mistake of the persons by whom the Psalms were collected and arranged, after the return from the captivity in Babylon.—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 2.—"*Let them be confounded;*" viz., among themselves, and in their own understandings: "*and put to shame;*" viz., in the sight and presence of men before whom they think to attain great glory, in banding themselves against me.—*Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 3.—"*Aha, aha.*" In describing his human foes, our Saviour represents them as saying to him, "*Aha, aha.*" These exclamations are ebullitions of exulting insolence. They can escape from the lips of those only who are at once haughty and cruel, and insensible to the delicacies and decorums of demeanour. Doubtless, they would be the favourite expressions of the rude rabble that accompanied the traitor in his ignoble campaign against Incarnate Love, and of the rude aristocratic mob that held over the Apostle of Heaven the mockery of an ecclesiastical trial, and of the larger, more excited, and more rancorous multitude that insultingly accompanied him to the cross, and mocked him, and wagged their heads at him, and railed upon him as he meekly, but majestically, hung on the accursed tree. The prescient Saviour would, no doubt, catch in his ears the distant mutter of all the violent and ruthless exclamations with which his foes were about to rend the air; and, amid these heartless and sneering ejaculations, he could not but feel the keen and poisoning edge of the malevolent and hilarious cry, "*Aha, aha.*" O miracle of mercy! He who deserved the hallelujahs of an intelligent universe, and the special hosannahs of all the children of men, had first to anticipate, and then to endure from the mouths of the very rebels whom he came to bless and to save, the malicious tauntings of "*Aha, aha.*"—*James Frame.*

Verse 4.—"*Such as love thy salvation.*" They love it for its own sake; they love it for the sake of him who procured it by his obedience until death; they love it for the sake of that Holy Spirit who moved them to seek it and accept it; and they love it for the sake of their own souls, which they cannot but love, and which, without it, would be the most miserable outcasts in the universe. No wonder that in the light of its intrinsic importance, and of its extrinsic relations, they should be "such as love God's salvation." All men are lovers as well as seekers; for all men love. Some love money more than God's salvation; others love pleasure, even the pleasures of sin, more than God's salvation; and others love bustle and business more than God's salvation. But, as the stamp of the material, the temporal and the evanescent, is on all these earthly objects of men's love, the friends of Jesus elevate above them all, as the worthier object of their regard and embrace, the salvation of God.—*James Frame.*

Verse 4.—"*Let God be magnified.*" Not only "*The Lord be magnified,*" but also "*alway.*" Behold, when thou wast straying, and wast turned away from him; he recalled thee: *Be the Lord magnified.* Behold, he hath inspired thee with confession of sins; thou hast confessed, he hath given pardon: *Be the Lord magnified.* . . . . Now, thou hast begun to advance, thou hast been justified, thou hast arrived at a sort of excellence of virtue; is it not a seemly

thing that *thou* also sometime be magnified? No! *Let them say, Be the Lord alway magnified.* A sinner thou art, be he magnified in order that he may call; thou confessest, be he magnified in order that he may forgive: now thou livest justly, be he magnified in order that he may direct; thou perseverest even unto the end, be he magnified in order that he may glorify. *Be the Lord*, then, *alway magnified.* Let just men say this, let them say this that seek him. Whosoever doth not say this, doth not seek him. . . . . *Be the Lord magnified.* But, wilt thou thyself never be great? wilt thou be nowhere? In him was something, in me nothing; but if in him is whatsoever I am, *be he magnified*, not I. But, what of thee? "*But I am poor and needy:*" he is rich, he abounding, he needing nothing. Behold my light, behold whence I am illumined, for I cry, "Thou shalt illumine my candle, O Lord; my God, thou shalt illumine my darkness. The Lord doth loose men fettered, the Lord raiseth up men crushed, the Lord maketh wise the blind men, the Lord keepeth the proselytes." Psalm xviii. 28; Psalm cxlvi. 7. What, then, of thee? "*But I am needy and poor.*" I am like an orphan, my soul is like a widow destitute and desolate; help I seek, alway mine infirmity I confess. "*But I am poor and needy.*" There have been forgiven me my sins, now I have begun to follow the commandments of God; still, however, I am needy and poor. Why still needy and poor? Because I see another law in my members fighting against the law of my mind. Rom. vii. 23. Why needy and poor? Because, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." Matt. v. 6. Still I hunger, still I thirst.—*Augustine.*

Verse 5.—"*But I am poor and needy.*" He had been rich, but for our sake he had become poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich. Out of the fulness of his grace he had voluntarily entered, for our sakes, into a state in which he had experience, and most bitter experience, of the want of the means of enjoyment. . . . . But the word here rendered "*poor*" is often, elsewhere, translated afflicted; in various ways he was afflicted. He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and the acquaintance of grief. He was reproached, and "reproach broke his heart."—*James Frame.*

Verse 5.—"*I am poor and needy.*" By this I hold to be meant the chastisements, and fiery trials that come from *God the Father;* the temptations and bitter assaults of that foul and fell fiend, *Satan;* the persecutions and vexations inflicted by the hands of unreasonable *and wicked men;* and (but in this following *Christ* must be exempted) the inward corruptions, disordered motions, unsettled affections, and the original pollutions brought from the mother's womb; with the soul and body's inaptness and unableness with cheerfulness and constancy to run the direct and just paths of God's commandments. Many of these made the Head, all of these (and more, too) the members, "*poor and needy.*"—*John Barlow.* 1618.

Verse 5.—"*O Lord, make no tarrying.*" His prayer for himself, like his prayer for his foes and for his friends, was answered. The Lord made no tarrying. Ere four and twenty hours had rolled past, his rescued spirit was in Paradise, and the crucified thief was with him. O what a change! The morning saw him condemned at the bar of an earthly tribunal, sentenced to death, and nailed to the bitter tree; before the evening shadowed the hill of Calvary, he was nestling in the bosom of God, and had become the great centre of attraction and of admiration to all the holy intelligences of the universe. The morning saw him led out through the gate of the Jerusalem below, surrounded by a ribald crowd, whose hootings rung in his ear; but ere the night fell, he had pased through the gate of the Jerusalem above, and his tread was upon the streets of gold, and angel anthems rose high through the dome of heaven, and joy filled the heart of God.—*James Frame.*

Verse 5 (*third clause*).—"*Helper,*" in all good works; "*Deliverer,*" from all evil ones. "*Make no long tarrying:*" it is the cry of the individual sinner.—*Dionysius the Carthusian* (1471), *quoted in Neale and Littledale's Commentary.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—I. Occasion of his prayer. 1. Affliction. 2. Helplessness. II. Subject of his prayer. Deliverance, help. III. Importunity of his prayer. The time of deliverance may be in answer to prayer, as well as deliverance itself.

Verse 1.—I. Times when such urgent prayer is allowable, praiseworthy, or faulty. II. Reasons for expecting a speedy reply. III. Consolations if delay should occur.

Verse 2.—I. There are those who seek our soul's hurt. II. We must oppose them, not dally or yield. III. Our best weapon is prayer to God. IV. Their defeat is here described.

Verse 3.—I. Who are these who cry "shame"? II. What master do they serve? III. What shall their wages be?

Verse 4.—Joy for seekers, and employment for finders.

Verse 4 (*last clause*).—I. The character. II. The saying. III. The wish.

Verse 5.—I. Who need help? II. Who renders help? III. What it comes to: "deliver." IV. What prayer it suggests.

Verse 5.—I. Confession: "I am poor and needy." II. Profession: "Thou art my help," etc. III. Supplication: "Make haste;" "Make no tarrying."

PSALM LXXI.

There is no title to this Psalm, and hence some conjecture that Psalm LXX. is intended to be a prelude to it, and has been broken off from it. Such imaginings have no value with us. We have already met with five Psalms without title, which are, nevertheless, as complete as those which bear them.

We have here THE PRAYER OF THE AGED BELIEVER, *who, in holy confidence of faith, strengthened by a long and remarkable experience, pleads against his enemies, and asks further blessings for himself. Anticipating a gracious reply, he promises to magnify the Lord exceedingly.*

DIVISION.—*The first four verses are faith's cry for help; the next four are a testimony of experience. From verse* 9—13, *the aged saint pleads against his foes, and then rejoices in hope, verses* 14—16. *He returns to prayer again in verses* 17 *and* 18, *repeats the confident hopes which cheered his soul, verses* 19, 20, 21; *and then he closes with the promise of abounding in thanksgiving. Throughout, this Psalm may be regarded as the utterance of struggling, but unstaggering, faith.*

EXPOSITION.

IN thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.

2 Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me.

3 Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou *art* my rock and my fortress.

4 Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.

1. "*In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.*" Jehovah deserves our confidence; let him have it all. Every day must we guard against every form of reliance upon an arm of flesh, and hourly hang our faith upon the ever faithful God. Not only *on* God must we rest, as a man stands on a rock, but *in* him must we trust, as a man hides in a cave. The more intimate we are with the Lord, the firmer will our trust be. God knows our faith, and yet he loves to hear us avow it; hence, the psalmist not only trusts in the Lord, but tells him that he is so trusting. "*Let me never be put to confusion.*" So long as the world stands, stand thou by me; yea, for ever and ever be faithful to thy servant. If thou forsake me, men will ridicule my religion, and how shall I be able to answer them? Confusion will silence me, and thy cause will be put to shame. This verse is a good beginning for prayer; those who commence with trust shall conclude with joy.

2. "*Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape.*" Be true, O God, to thy word. It is a righteous thing in thee to keep the promises which thou hast made unto thy servants. I have trusted thee, and thou wilt not be unrighteous to forget my faith. I am taken as in a net, but do thou liberate me from the malice of my persecutors. "*Incline thine ear unto me, and save me.*" Stoop to my feebleness, and hear my faint whispers; be gracious to my infirmities, and smile upon me: I ask salvation; listen thou to my petitions, and save me. Like one wounded and left for dead by mine enemies, I need that thou bend over me and bind up my wounds. These mercies are asked on the plea of faith, and they cannot, therefore, be denied.

3. "*Be thou my strong habitation.*" Permit me to enter into thee, and be

as much at home as a man in his own house, and then suffer me to remain in thee as my settled abode. Whereas foes molest me, I need dwelling framed and bulwarked, to sustain a siege and resist the attacks of armies; let, then, thine omnipotence secure me, and be as a fortress unto me. Here we see a weak man, but he is in a strong habitation; his security rests upon the tower in which he hides, and is not placed in jeopardy through his personal feebleness. "*Whereunto I may continually resort.*" Fast shut is this castle against all adversaries, its gates they cannot burst open; the drawbridge is up, the portcullis is down, the bars are fast in their places; but, there is a secret door, by which friends of the great Lord can enter at all hours of the day or night, as often as ever they please. There is never an hour when it is unlawful to pray. Mercy's gates stand wide open, and shall do so, till, at the last, the Master of the house has risen up and shut to the door. Believers find their God to be their habitation, strong and accessible, and this is for them a sufficient remedy for all the ills of their mortal life. "*Thou hast given commandment to save me.*" Nature is charged to be tender with God's servants; Providence is ordered to work their good, and the forces of the invisible world are ordained as their guardians. David charged all his troops to spare the young man Absalom, but yet he fell. God's commandment is of far higher virtue, for it compels obedience, and secures its end. Destruction cannot destroy us, famine cannot starve us: but we laugh at both, while God's mandate shields us. No stones of the field can throw us down, while angels bear us up in their hands; neither can the beasts of the field devour us, while David's God delivers us from their ferocity, or Daniel's God puts them in awe of us. "*For thou art my rock and my fortress.*" In God we have all the security which nature which furnishes the rock, and art which builds the fortress, could supply; he is the complete preserver of his people. Immutability may be set forth by the rock, and omnipotence by the fortress. Happy is he who can use the personal pronoun "my"—not only once, but as many times as the many aspects of the Lord may render desirable. Is he a strong habitation? I will call him "*my* strong habitation," and he shall be *my* rock, *my* fortress, *my* God (verse 4), *my* hope, *my* trust (verse 5), *my* praise (verse 6). All mine shall be his, all his shall be mine. This was the reason why the psalmist was persuaded that God had commanded his salvation, namely, because he had enabled him to exercise a calm and appropriating faith.

4. "*Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked.*" God is on the same side with us, and those who are our enemies are also his, for they are wicked; therefore will the Lord surely rescue his own confederates, and he will not suffer the evil to triumph over the just. He who addresses such a prayer as this to heaven, does more injury to his enemies than if he had turned a battery of Armstrongs upon them. "*Out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.*" Being wicked to God, they become unrighteous towards men, and cruel in their persecutions of the godly. Two hands are here mentioned—they grasp and they crush; they strike and they would slay if God did not prevent; had they as many hands as Briareus, the finger of God would more than match them.

5 For thou *art* my hope, O Lord GOD: *thou art* my trust from my youth.

6 By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise *shall be* continually of thee.

7 I am as a wonder unto many; but thou *art* my strong refuge.

8 Let my mouth be filled *with* thy praise *and with* thy honour all the day.

5. "*For thou art my hope, O Lord God.*" God who gives us grace to hope in him, will a suredly fulfil our hope, and, therefore, we may plead it in prayer. His name is "Jehovah, the hope of Israel" (Jer. xvii. 13); and, as he cannot be a false or failing hope, we may expect to see our confidence justified. "*Thou art my trust from my youth.*" David had proved his faith by notable exploits when he was a youth and ruddy; it was to him a cheering recollection, and he felt persuaded that the God of his youth would not forsake him in his age. They are highly favoured who can like David, Samuel, Josiah, Timothy, and others say, "Thou art my trust from my youth."

6. "*By thee have I been holden up from the womb.*" Before he was able to understand the power which preserved him, he was sustained by it. God knows us before we know anything. The elect of old lay in the bosom of God before they were laid on their mothers' bosoms; and when their infantile weakness had no feet strong enough to carry it, the Lord upheld it. We do well to reflect upon divine goodness to us in childhood, for it is full of food for gratitude. "*Thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels.*" Even before conscious life, the care of God is over his chosen. Birth is a mystery of mercy, and God is both with mother and babe. If marriages are registered in heaven, we may be sure that births are also. Holy women do well to bless God for his mercy to them in nature's perilous hour; but every one who is born of woman has equal cause for thankfulness. She, whose life is preserved, should render thanks, and so should he whose life is given. "*My praise shall be continually of thee.*" Where goodness has been unceasingly received, praise should unceasingly be offered. God is the circle where praise should begin, continue, and endlessly revolve, since in him we live, and move, and have our being.

7. "*I am as a wonder unto many.*" "To thousand eyes a mark and gaze am I." The saints are men wondered at; often their dark side is gloomy even to amazement, while their bright side is glorious even to astonishment. The believer is a riddle, an enigma puzzling the unspiritual; he is a monster warring with those delights of the flesh, which are the all in all of other men; he is a prodigy, unaccountable to the judgments of ungodly men; a wonder gazed at, feared, and, by-and-by, contemptuously derided. Few understand us, many are surprised at us. "*But thou art my strong refuge.*" Here is the answer to our riddle. If we are strong, it is in God; if we are safe, our refuge shelters us; if we are calm, our soul hath found her stay in God. When faith is understood, and the grounds of her confidence seen, the believer is no longer a wonder; but the marvel is that so much unbelief remains among the sons of men.

8. "*Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day.*" What a blessed mouthful! A man never grows nauseated though the flavour of it be all day in his mouth. God's bread is always in our mouths, so should his praise be. He fills us with good; let us be also filled with gratitude. This would leave no room for murmuring or backbiting; therefore, may we well join with holy David in this sacred wish.

9 Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.

10 For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together,

11 Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for *there is* none to deliver *him.*

12 O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help.

13 Let them be confounded *and* consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered *with* reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt.

9. "*Cast me not off in the time of old age.*" David was not tired of his Master, and his only fear was lest his Master should be tired of him. The Amalekite in the Bible history left his Egyptian servant to famish when he grew old and sick, but not so the Lord of saints; even to hoar hairs he bears and carries us. Alas for us, if we were abandoned by our God, as many a courtier has been by his prince! Old age robs us of personal beauty, and deprives us of strength for active service; but it does not lower us in the love and favour of God. An ungrateful country leaves its worn-out defenders to starve upon a scanty pittance, but the pensioners of heaven are satisfied with good things. "*Forsake me not when my strength faileth.*" Bear with me, and endure my infirmities. To be forsaken of God is the worst of all conceivable ills, and if the believer can be but clear of that grievous fear, he is happy: no saintly heart need be under any apprehension upon this point.

10. "*For mine enemies speak against me.*" Dogs howl over a dying lion. When David's arm was able to chastise his foes, they were yet impudent enough to slander him, and he fears that now they will take fresh license in the hour of his weakness. The text most probably means that his enemies had said that God would forsake him; and, therefore, he is the more earnest that the Lord's faithful dealings may give them the lie. "*And they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together.*" The psalmist had enemies, and these were most malicious; seeking his utter destruction, they were very persevering, and staid long upon the watch; to this they added cunning, for they lay in ambush to surprise him, and take him at a disadvantage: and all this they did with the utmost unanimity and deliberation, neither spoiling their design by want of prudence, nor marring its accomplishment by a lack of unity. The Lord our God is our only and all-sufficient resort from every form of persecution.

11. "*Saying, God hath forsaken him.*" O bitter taunt! There is no worse arrow in all the quivers of hell. Our Lord felt this barbed shaft, and it is no marvel if his disciples feel the same. Were this exclamation the truth, it were indeed an ill day for us; but, glory be to God, it is a barefaced lie. "*Persecute and take him.*" Let loose the dogs of persecution upon him, seize him, worry him, "*for there is none to deliver him.*" Down with him, for he has no friends. It is safe to insult him, for none will come to his rescue. O cowardly boasts of a braggart foe, how do ye wound the soul of the believer; and only when his faith cries to his Lord is he able to endure your cruelty.

12. "*O God, be not far from me.*" Nearness to God is our conscious security. A child in the dark is comforted by grasping its father's hand. "*O my God, make haste for my help.*" To call God ours, as having entered into covenant with us, is a mighty plea in prayer, and a great stay to our faith. The cry of "make haste" has occurred many times in this portion of the Psalms, and it was evoked by the sore pressure of affliction. Sharp sorrows soon put an end to procrastinating prayers.

13. "*Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul.*" It will be all this to them to see thy servant preserved; their envy and malice, when disappointed, will fill them with life-consuming bitterness. The defeat of their plans shall confuse them, they shall be confounded as they enquire the reason for their overthrow, the men they seek to destroy seem so weak, and their cause so contemptible, that they will be filled with amazement as they see them not only survive all opposition, but even surmount it. How confounded must Pharaoh have been when Israel multiplied, despite his endeavours to exterminate the race; and how consumed with rage must the Scribes and Pharisees have become when they saw the gospel spreading from land to land by the very means which they used for its destruction. "*Let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt.*" He would have their shame made visible to all eyes, by their wearing it in their blushes as a mantle. They would have made a laughing-stock of the believer, if his God had forsaken him; therefore, let unbelief and atheism be made a public scoffing in their persons.

14 But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.

15 My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness *and* thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof.

16 I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, *even* of thine only.

14. The holy faith of the persecuted saint comes to the front in these three verses. "*But I will hope continually.*" When I cannot rejoice in what I have, I will look forward to what shall be mine, and will still rejoice. Hope will live on a bare common, and sing on a branch laden down with snow. No date and no place are unsuitable for hope. Hell alone excepted, hope is a dweller in all regions. We may always hope, for we always have grounds for it: we will always hope, for it is a never-failing consolation. "*And will yet praise thee more and more.*" He was not slack in thanksgiving; in fact, no man was ever more diligent in it; yet he was not content with all his former praises, but vowed to become more and more a grateful worshipper. When good things are both continual and progressive with us, we are on the right tack. We ought to be misers in doing good, and our motto should be "more and more." While we do not disdain to "rest and be thankful," we cannot settle down into resting in our thankfulness. "*Superior*" cries the eagle, as he mounts towards the sun: higher and yet higher is also our aim, as we soar aloft in duty and devotion. It is our continual hope that we shall be able more and more to magnify the Lord.

15. "*My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day.*" We are to bear testimony as experience enables us, and not withhold from others that which we have tasted and handled. The faithfulness of God in saving us, in delivering us out of the hand of our enemies, and in fulfilling his promises, is to be everywhere proclaimed by those who have proved it in their own history. How gloriously conspicuous is righteousness in the divine plan of redemption! It should be the theme of constant discourse. The devil rages against the substitutionary sacrifice, and errorists of every form make this the main point of their attack; be it ours, therefore, to love the doctrine, and to spread its glad tidings on every side, and at all times. Mouths are never so usefully employed as in recounting the righteousness of God revealed in the salvation of believers in Jesus. The preacher who should be confined to this one theme would never need seek another: it is the *medulla theologiæ*, the very pith and marrow of revealed truth. Has our reader been silent upon this choice subject? Let us, then, press him to tell abroad what he enjoys within: he does not well who keeps such glad tidings to himself. "*For I know not the numbers thereof.*" He knew the sweetness of it, the sureness, the glory, and the truth of it; but as to the full reckoning of its plenitude, variety, and sufficiency, he felt he could not reach to the height of the great argument. Lord, where I cannot count I will believe, and when a truth surpasses numeration I will take to admiration. When David spoke of his enemies, he said they were more in number than the hairs of his head; he had, therefore, some idea of their number, and found a figure suitable to set it out; but, in the case of the Lord's covenant mercies, he declares, "I know not the number," and does not venture upon any sort of comparison. To creatures belong number and limit, to God and his grace there is neither. We may, therefore, continue to tell out his great salvation all day long, for the theme is utterly inexhaustible.

16. "*I will go in the strength of the Lord God.*" Our translators give us a good sense, but not the sense in this place, which is on this wise, "I will come with the mighty deeds of the Lord Jehovah." He would enter into those deeds by admiring study, and then, wherever he went, he would continue to rehearse them. He should ever be a welcome guest who can tell us of the mighty acts of the Lord, and help us to put our trust in him. The authorised version may

be used by us as a resolve in all our exertions and endeavours. In our own strength we must fail; but, when we hear the voice which saith, "Go in this thy might," we may advance without fear. Though hell itself were in the way, the believer would pursue the path of duty, crying: "*I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.*" Man's righteousness is not fit to be mentioned—filthy rags are best hidden; neither is there any righteousness under heaven, or in heaven, comparable to the divine. As God himself fills all space, and is, therefore, the only God, leaving no room for another, so God's righteousness, in Christ Jesus, fills the believer's soul, and he counts all other things but dross and dung "that he may win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith." What would be the use of speaking upon any other righteousness to a dying man? and all are dying men. Let those who will cry up man's natural innocence, the dignity of the race, the purity of philosophers, the loveliness of untutored savages, the power of sacraments, and the infallibility of pontiffs; this is the true believer's immovable resolve: "I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." For ever dedicated to thee, my Lord, be this poor, unworthy tongue, whose glory it shall be to glorify thee.

17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.

18 Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto *this* generation, *and* thy power to every one *that* is to come.

17. "*O God, thou hast taught me from my youth.*" It was comfortable to the psalmist to remember that from his earliest days he had been the Lord's disciple. None are too young to be taught of God, and they make the most proficient scholars who begin betimes. "*And hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.*" He had learned to tell what he knew, he was a pupil teacher: he continued still learning and declaring, and did not renounce his first master, this, also, was his comfort, but it is one which those who have been seduced from the school of the gospel into the various colleges of philosophy and scepticism, will not be able to enjoy. A sacred conservatism is much needed in these days, when men are giving up old lights for new. We mean both to learn and to teach the wonders of redeeming love, till we can discover something nobler or more soul-satisfying; for this reason we hope that our greyheads will be found in the same road as we have trodden, even from our beardless youth.

18. "*Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not.*" There is something touching in the sight of hair whitened with the snows of many a winter: the old and faithful soldier receives consideration from his king, the venerable servant is beloved by his master. When our infirmities multiply, we may, with confidence, expect enlarged privileges in the world of grace, to make up for our narrowing range in the field of nature. Nothing shall make God forsake those who have not forsaken him. Our fear is lest he should do so; but his promise kisses that fear into silence. "*Until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation.*" He desired to continue his testimony and complete it; he had respect to the young men and little children about him, and knowing the vast importance of training them in the fear of God, he longed to make them all acquainted with the power of God to support his people, that they also might be led to walk by faith. He had leaned on the almighty arm, and could speak experimentally of its all-sufficiency, and longed to do so ere life came to a close. "*And thy power to every one that is to come.*" He would leave a record for unborn ages to read. He thought the Lord's power to be so worthy of praise, that he would make the ages ring with it till

time should be no more. For this cause believers live, and they should take care to labour zealously for the accomplishment of this their most proper and necessary work. Blessed are they who begin in youth to proclaim the name of the Lord, and cease not until their last hour brings their last word for their divine Master.

19 Thy righteousness also, O God, *is* very high, who hast done great things: O God, who *is* like unto thee!

20 *Thou,* which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.

21 Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.

19. "*Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high.*" Very sublime, unsearchable, exalted, and glorious is the holy character of God, and his way of making men righteous. His plan of righteousness uplifts men from the gates of hell to the mansions of heaven. It is a high-doctrine gospel, gives a high experience, leads to high practice, and ends in high felicity. "*Who hast done great things.*" The exploits of others are mere child's play compared with thine, and are not worthy to be mentioned in the same age. Creation, providence, redemption, are all unique, and nothing can compare with them. "*O God, who is like unto thee.*" As thy works are so transcendent, so art thou. Thou art without compeer, or even second, and such are thy works, and such, especially, thy plan of justifying sinners by the righteousness which thou hast provided. Adoration is a fit frame of mind for the believer. When he draws near to God, he enters into a region where everything is surpassingly sublime; miracles of love abound on every hand, and marvels of mingled justice and grace. A traveller among the high Alps often feels overwhelmed with awe, amid their amazing sublimities; much more is this the case when we survey the heights and depths of the mercy and holiness of the Lord. "*O God, who is like unto thee.*"

20. "*Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again.*" Here is faith's inference from the infinite greatness of the Lord. He has been strong to smite; he will be also strong to save. He has shown me many heavy and severe trials, and he will also show me many and precious mercies. He has almost killed me, he will speedily revive me; and though I have been almost dead and buried, he will give me a resurrection, and "*bring me up again from the depths of the earth.*" However low the Lord may permit us to sink, he will fix a limit to the descent, and in due time will bring us up again. Even when we are laid low in the tomb, the mercy is that we can go no lower, but shall retrace our steps and mount to better lands; and all this, because the Lord is ever mighty to save. A little God would fail us, but not Jehovah the Omnipotent. It is safe to lean on him, since he bears up the pillars both of heaven and earth.

21. "*Thou shalt increase my greatness.*" As a king, David grew in influence and power. God did great things for him, and by him, and this is all the greatness believers want. May we have faith in God, such as these words evince. "*And comfort me on every side.*" As we were surrounded with afflictions, so shall we be environed with consolations. From above, and from all around, light shall come to dispel our former gloom; the change shall be great, indeed, when the Lord returns to comfort us.

22 I will also praise thee with the psaltery, *even* thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel.

23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed.

24 My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

Here is the final vow of praise.

22. "*I will also praise thee with the psaltery.*" Love so amazing calls for sweetest praise. David would give his best music, both vocal and instrumental, to the Best of Masters. His harp should not be silent, nor his voice. "*Even thy truth, O my God.*" This is ever a most enchanting attribute—viz., the truth or faithfulness of our covenant God. On this we rest, and from it we draw streams of richest consolation. His promises are sure, his love unalterable, his veracity indisputable. What saint will not praise him as he remembers this? "*Unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel.*" Here is a new name, and, as it were, a new song. The Holy One of Israel is at once a lofty and an endearing name, full of teaching. Let us resolve, by all means within our power, to honour him.

23. "*My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee.*" It shall be no weariness to me to praise thee. It shall be a delightful recreation, a solace, a joy. The essence of song lies in the holy joy of the singer. "*And my soul, which thou hast redeemed.*" Soul-singing is the soul of singing. Till men are redeemed, they are like instruments out of tune; but when once the precious blood has set them at liberty, then are they fitted to magnify the Lord who bought them. Our being bought with a price is a more than sufficient reason for our dedicating ourselves to the earnest worship of God our Saviour.

24. "*My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long.*" I will talk to myself, and to thee, my God, and to my fellow men: my theme shall be thy way of justifying sinners, the glorious display of thy righteousness and grace in thy dear Son; and this most fresh and never-to-be-exhausted subject shall be ever with me, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. Others talk of their beloveds, and they shall be made to hear of mine. I will become an incessant talker, while this matter lies on my heart, for in all company this subject will be in season. "*For they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.*" As in many other Psalms, the concluding stanzas speak of that as an accomplished fact, which was only requested in former verses. Faith believes that she has her request, and she has it. She is the substance of things hoped for—a substance so real and tangible, that it sets the glad soul a-singing. Already sin, Satan, and the world are vanquished, and the victory is ours.

"Sin, Satan, Death appear
To harass and appal:
Yet since the gracious Lord is near,
Backward they go, and fall.

We meet them face to face,
Through Jesus' conquest blest;
March in the triumph of his grace,
Right onward to our rest."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—This Psalm, which has no title in the Hebrew, in the LXX. has the title, "*By David, of the sons of Jonadab, and of those who were first made prisoners.*" If any authority be allowed to this title, we must suppose that this was a Psalm written by David, which was used, as particularly adapted to the circumstances of their condition, by the Rechabites, who were descended from Jonadab (Jer. xxxv.), and the Jews, who were taken by the Chaldeans as captives to Babylon. However this may be, it seems probable that David was the author of this Psalm, and that he wrote it in his extreme age, and but a little while before he died. The line which follows the next Psalm, and closes the second book, perhaps has a reference to this fact. Some of the Fathers interpret the Psalm mystically of the church in her old age, and her trials at the end of the world.—"*Plain Commentary.*"

Whole Psalm.—The Psalm, I am aware, is anonymous, and is, therefore, by many recent critics referred to some later writer; but I am satisfied that Venema and Hengstenberg have adduced sufficient reasons for retaining the opinion of Calvin and the older expositors, that it is from David's pen, and is the plaintive song of his old age. It shows us the soul of the aged saint, darkened by the remembrance of his great transgression, and by the swarms of sorrows with which that sin filled all his later years. But he finds comfort in reverting to the happy days of his childhood, and especially to the irrevocable trust which he was then enabled to repose in God. The thoughts and feelings expressed remind one of those which invest with such a solemn, tender interest the Second Epistle to Timothy, which embalms the dying thoughts of the great apostle. Like Paul, David takes a retrospect of the Lord's dealings with him from the beginning; and, in effect, declares, with the dying apostle: "I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." 2 Tim. i. 12. Only, there is this notable difference between the two, that while Paul gathered confirmation of his faith from the experience of a thirty years' walk with his Lord, David's experience stretched over more than twice so many years; for it began with his childhood.—*William Binnie.*

Whole Psalm.—It will be asked how Christ could use such verses as verses 9 and 18, since these look forward apparently to the frailty of age. The reply to this felt difficulty is, that these expressions are used by him in sympathy with his members, and in his own case denote the state equivalent to age. *His* old age was, ere he reached three and thirty years, as John viii. 57 is supposed to imply; for "Worn-out men live fast." Barclay seems to give the right sense in the following lines:—

> "Grown old and weak, with pain and grief,
> Before his years were half complete."

Besides, the words signify, "Forsake me not from this time onward, even were I to live to grey hairs." This is a view that conveys precious consolation to aged ones, who might be ready to say that Christ could not altogether enter into their feelings, having never experienced the failing weakness of age, the debility, the decay, the bodily infirmities so trying to the spirit. But this Psalm shows us, that in effect he did pass through that stage of our sojourning, worn out and wasted in bodily frame and feeling, by living so much in so short a time. The aged members of his church may find his sweet sympathy breathed out in Isaiah xlvi. 3, 4; and, here they may almost see him learning the lesson in a human way, as he bends under the weight of our frailties. For this reason, among others, this Psalm was specially prized by Robert Blair, one of our godly forefathers. He used to call it "*His Psalm.*"—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 1.—"*In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.*" As if he should say,

O Lord, permit not those who put their trust in thee to be confounded, and to be held up as a laughing-stock. I have placed all my hope in thee, and thou art that God who, for the sake of thy goodness and truth, hast never deserted those who hope in thee. If thou shalt suffer me to be confounded, the enemies to triumph, and my hope to be placed in thee in vain, certainly this shame shall fall upon thine own name. . . . . Let us, therefore, learn from this place to be more anxious about what may happen to the name of God through us, than to our own; whether it be through us in doing, or in us in suffering. The prophet is fearful lest he should be confounded on account of his hope placed in God, although it was not in his own power, nor could he prevent it. . . . . .

It is necessary, first, that we should be of those who place their hope in God, then it is necessary that this piety of our hearts should not be confined to ourselves only, but should be known to all those who come in contact with us, even our opponents and enemies: else it is not possible for us to dread this kind of confusion feared by the prophet, when nobody knows that our hope is placed in God. No artist suffers confusion, if he has never shared the good opinion of his fellow men. To no sick man can it be said, Physician, heal thyself, if his reputation for medical skill has never stood high. So of those, it cannot be said, They hoped in God, let him save them if he will have them, of whom it was never remarked that they placed any hope in God. This solicitude, therefore, belongs only to those whose hope is in the Lord: upon others it cannot fall.—*Musculus.*

Verse 1.—"*In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.*" It is a good beginning, and a recommendation to our prayers, when we can declare our faith and trust to be in God alone.—*Edward Walter, in "A Help to the profitable reading of the Psalms."* 1854.

Verse 2.—"*Deliver me in thy righteousness.*" "*Incline thine ear.*" Let my deliverance be the fruit of thy promise, and of my prayer; and so it will be much the sweeter.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 2.—"*In thy righteousness.*" The *righteousness* of God is in this place that virtue by which he makes good his promises — revenges injuries and rewards piety—which is elsewhere called his *veracity*. Upon this perfection David here calls, not because he was innocent before God, but because God had bound himself to him by promises, as if he were, in the presence of the men who were persecuting him, both innocent and righteous; and, therefore, worthy of being delivered from this last terrible calamity into which he had fallen through Absalom, since God had thus acted towards him.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 2.—"*Thy righteousness.*" Not *mine*. He knew that he was being chastened for his sin against Uriah. He pleads no merit of his own.—*Simon de Muis.*

Verse 2.—"*Incline thine ear.*" And since I am so wounded that I am not able to send up my cry to thee, the Most High, do thou *incline thine ear to me* as I lie half-dead, left by the robbers who have wounded and spoiled me.—*Gerhohus.*

Verse 3.—"*Whereunto I may continually resort.*" Would he then want to repair to him always? Our necessities, our work, our danger require it constantly. We are commanded to pray without ceasing. And if, while we acknowledge and feel the obligation, we are renewed in the spirit of our mind, we shall not lament it. Loving him, as well as depending upon him, we shall find it good to draw near to God, and delight ourselves in the Almighty; and we shall never find him, when we want him, inaccessible. There is a way to our "*strong habitation*," and we know the way. There is a door, and we have the key. No sentinel keeps us back; the dwelling is our *own*: and who dares to forbid us all its accommodations and contents? Kings, however disposed, cannot be always approachable. Owing to the multitude of their claims, and the limitation of their powers, and the importance of keeping up a sense of

their dignity, they are only accessible at certain times, and with stately formalities. But the King of kings allows us to come boldly to the throne of grace: and enjoins us in every thing, by prayer and supplication, to make our requests unto him. We cannot be too importunate, or by our continual coming weary him.—*William Jay.*

Verse 3.—"*Thou hast given commandment to save me.*" Let us observe his words; he ascribes to the word and command of God a saving virtue, which no power on earth, none in hell, nor death itself can resist. Only, he says, give the command that I may be saved, and, in a moment. I shall be wholly saved —*Musculus.*

Verse 4.—"*The cruel man*" is literally the leavened man, leavened with hatred of truth and enmity to God; and, therefore, a violent opposer of his people. So, in 1 Cor. v. 8, we are cautioned against the "leaven of malice and wickedness," which, in accordance with the figure, may pervade the whole natural character of an ungodly man, his faculties and affections.—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 5.—"*Thou art my hope.*" Not only is our hope *in* him but he himself is our hope. "God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ," saith St. Paul, "our hope." 1 Tim. i. 1. Yea, there is a deeper, nearer depth: "The glory of the mystery of the gospel," says St. Paul, "is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Christ himself is our hope, as the only Author of it; Christ is our hope, as the End of it; and Christ, who is the Beginning and the End, is our hope also by the way; for he saith, "Christ *in* you, the hope of glory." Col. i. 27. Each yearning of our hearts, each ray of hope which gleams upon us, each touch which thrills through us, each voice which whispers in our inmost hearts of the good things laid up in store for us, if we will love God, are the light of Christ enlightening us, the touch of Christ raising us to new life, the voice of Christ, "Whoso cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out;" it is "Christ in us, the hope of glory," drawing us up by his Spirit who dwelleth in us, unto himself our hope. For our hope is not the glory of heaven, not joy, not peace, not rest from labour, not fulness of our wishes, nor sweet contentment of the whole soul, nor understanding of all mysteries and all knowledge, not only a torrent of delight; it is "Christ our God," "the hope of glory." Nothing which God *could* create is what we hope for; nothing which God could give us out of himself, no created glory, or bliss, or beauty, or majesty, or riches. What we hope for is our Redeeming God himself, his love, his bliss, the joy of our Lord himself who hath so loved us, to be our joy and our portion for ever.—*E. B. Pusey.*

Verse 5.—"*From my youth.*" The remembering and acknowledging of God in youth will be great satisfaction in old age. O what joy will reflection upon youthful piety yield! Even Seneca, a heathen, could say: "Youth well spent is the greatest comfort of old age." David could confidently plead with God for deliverance out of the hand of the wicked: "*For*," saith he, "*thou art my hope, O Lord God: thou art my trust from my youth.*" "Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth." (verse 9; see also verses 17, 18). An ingenuous master will not turn off a superannuated servant. When the proconsul bade Polycarp deny Christ and swear by the emperor, he answered: "I have served Christ these eighty-six years, and he hath not once injured me, and shall I now deny him?" Jacob could say: "God hath fed me all my life long unto this day; he hath been kind to me all my days, and I trust he will look to me even to the end; and shall I now turn my back on him?" Whither can I go to mend myself for a master? "Thou only hast the words of eternal life." He that hath been the stay of my youth, will be the staff of my age. I dare venture my soul upon his promise who hath hitherto maintained me by his providence. "In the days of my youth, the secret of God was upon my tabernacle, his candle did shine upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkness;" and, though now "the sun, and the light, and moon and stars be darkened," in this my natural horizon,

yet "the Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." I have abundant experience of his grace and presence. O the days of mercy I have had many years ago! A good man said: "I got that in my youth, which I would not for all the world have to get now."—*Oliver Heywood.* 1629—1702.

Verse 6.—He did not, like most men, recognise the hand of God only when, in an extraordinary manner, it became manifest in life; but his eye of faith regards the ordinary works of God as miracles. The translation from his mother's womb to the light of day is to him an object of praise. (Psalm xxii. 9, 10.) And, really, is not the preservation of the embryo, in its narrow confines, a miracle? is it not a pledge, simultaneous with man's growing into being, of our after experience in life, that we have a God "who bringeth us out of death to light"? (Psalm lxviii. 20.) Is not the reason of our finding so little to praise, to be sought in our having no eyes for his daily miracles? The psalmist *has* eyes for the daily miracles of the Lord; and, therefore, his mouth is daily full of the praise of the Lord.—*Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 6.—Blessed be God that ever I was born.—*Halyburton.*

Verse 6.—This verse corresponds with the preceding, except that David proceeds farther. He not only celebrates the goodness of God, which he had experienced from his childhood, but, also, those proofs of it which he had received previous to his birth. An almost similar confession is contained in Psalm xxii. 9, 10, by which is magnified the wonderful power and inestimable goodness of God in the generation of men, the way and manner of which would be altogether incredible, were it not a fact with which we are quite familiar. If we are astonished at that part of the history of the flood, in which Moses declares (Genesis viii. 13), that Noah and his household lived ten months amidst the offensive nuisance produced by so many living creatures, when he could not draw the breath of life, have we not equal reason to marvel that the infant, shut up within its mother's womb, can live in such a condition as would suffocate the strongest man in half an hour? But we thus see how little account we make of the miracles which God works, in consequence of our familiarity with them. The Spirit, therefore, justly rebukes this ingratitude, by commending to our consideration this memorable instance of the grace of God which is exhibited in our birth and generation. When we are born into the world, although the mother do her office, and the midwife may be present with her, and many others may lend their help, yet did not God, putting, so to speak, his hand under us, receive us into his bosom, what would become of us? and what hope would there be of the continuance of our life? Yea, rather, were it not for this, our very birth would be an entrance into a thousand deaths. God, therefore, is with the highest propriety said *to take us out of our mother's bowels.* To this corresponds the concluding part of the verse, "*My praise shall be continually of thee;*" by which the psalmist means that he had been furnished with matter for praising God without intermission.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 7.—"*I am as a wonder unto many.*" The Hebrew word translated "*wonder*," would, perhaps, be better expressed by *portent.* It denotes anything uncommon and wonderful, and admits a double meaning. Some interpreters are of opinion, that it is here taken in the most favourable sense, and that the psalmist represents himself as considered, by the many, as a *prodigy of God's goodness.* But the whole tenor of the Psalm is against this meaning; which is not badly expressed by Green: "I am become a gazing-stock to the multitude."—*Alexander Geddes.* 1737—1802.

Verse 7.—"*I am as a wonder unto many,*" etc. On several accounts a converted man may be an object of surprise among his contemporaries. This may arise from the circumstance of his conversion dating at a late period of his life, when his long continuance in a state of impenitence seemed to render it

almost certain that he would persist in it to the last. It is, indeed, a wonder to see any human being's course entirely altered at a late period, and to observe him afterwards moving in a totally different direction, influenced by different principles. Or, to take the instance of another convert, the character he is enabled to sustain, founded upon his great change, is in such marked and continued contrast to his former habits of life as to render it difficult to recognise in the Christian of to-day the sinner of yesterday. "Is Saul also among the prophets?" Or, in yet another example, the means divinely employed to effect conversion may be, apparently, so disproportionate to the magnitude of the result, as to place the result itself under suspicion and doubt. Every godly man, like Ananias of old, may hesitate to admit into his society the persecutor or the profligate of unhappy notoriety, except upon clearly discerning that he has become a new creature in Christ Jesus, and that old evil habits have passed away. At the same time, his former ungodly associates are mortified at his renunciation of fellowship with them, and are malicious enough to promulgate false reports concerning his character and motives. "They think it strange," says the apostle, "that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you." Yet to such a convert his God is a sun and shield—a shield from the shafts of cruel slander, and a refuge to him from all storms of persecution. In all similar cases the language of the psalmist becomes particularly appropriate: "*I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge.*" —*John Leifchild.*

Verse 7.—"*A wonder.*" The Messiah did not attract the admiring gaze of mankind. He did arrest attention; he did excite "*wonder;*" but it was not the wonder of admiration. A few, whose eyes God had opened, saw, indeed, in some measure, the real grandeur there was amid all this apparent meanness. They "beheld his glory—the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father;" a glory that bedimmed all created lustre. But the great body of those who beheld him were "astonished" at him. His external appearance, especially when contrasted with his claim to Messiahship, shocked them. The Galilean peasant—the Nazarene carpenter—the son of Joseph, claiming God for his own Father,—declaring himself the "bread of life," and "the light of the world," and asserting that the destinies of eternity hung on the reception or rejection of him and his message; all this excited a mingled emotion of amazement and indignation, scorn and horror, in the bosom of the great majority of his countrymen. He was "*a wonder,*" a prodigy unto many. A mixture of pity and contempt, disgust and wonder, seems to have stirred the stern bosom of the Roman governor, when he brought him out wearing the robe of mock royalty and the torturing crown, and exclaimed, "Behold the man." Even his friends were confounded, though their astonishment bore a different character The closing scene, notwithstanding what appear to us very plain forewarnings, appears to have come on them like a thunderbolt. They were overwhelmed with amazement, as well as with sorrow. What blank astonishment sat on their countenances when he made the announcement, "Verily I say unto you, one of you shall betray me!" How must their amazement have risen at the successive scenes of Gethsemane, and the hall of the high priest, and the court of Pilate, till at last they saw him, in whom they trusted that he should redeem Israel, nailed to a cross like a felonious slave—execrated of man, and deserted of God! Then their amazement reached its consummation: they were "astonished at him."—*John Brown, in "The Sufferings and Glories of the Messiah."*

Verse 8.—"*Let my mouth be filled with thy praise.*" *Let my mouth*, I say, *be so filled with thy praise*, that from the bottom of my heart, even to the lips of my mouth, the plenitude of thy grace, O God, infused into my heart, and diffused over my lips, may loyally magnify thee; so shall I not be found like that people, of whom thou dost say: "This people honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." Isa. xxix. 13. *Gerhohus.*

Verse 9.—"*Cast me not off in the time of old age*," etc.; for now I have most need of thee. The white rose is soonest cankered; so is the white head soonest corrupted. *Sæpe nigrum cor est, caput album.* Satan maketh a prey of old Solomon, Asa, Lot, others; whom when young he could never so deceive. The heathens, therefore, well warn us to look well to our old age, as that which cometh not alone, but is infested with many diseases, both of body and mind. This David knew, and, therefore, prayed as here: "*Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.*" He is a rare old man that can say with Caleb (Joshua xiv. 10, 14), "Behold, the Lord hath kept me alive," etc.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 9.—"*Cast me not off in the time of old age*," etc. It is not unnatural or improper for a man who sees old age coming upon him to pray for special grace, and special strength, to enable him to meet what he cannot ward off, and what he cannot but dread; for who can look upon the infirmities of old age, as coming upon himself, but with sad and pensive feelings? Who would wish *to be* an old man? Who can look upon a man tottering with years, and broken down with infirmities; a man whose sight and hearing are gone; a man who is alone amidst the graves of all the friends that he had in early life; a man who is a burden to himself, and to the world; a man who has reached the "Last scene of all that ends the strange, eventful history"—that scene of

> "Second childishness, and mere oblivion,
> Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything;"

that scene when one can say—

> "I have lived long enough; my way of life
> Is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf;
> And that which should accompany old age,
> As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
> I must not look to have;"

who can think of all this and not pray for special grace for himself, should he live to see those days of infirmity and weakness? And who, in view of such infirmities, can fail to see the propriety of seeking the favour of God in early years?—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 9.—"*Cast me not off in the time of old age*," etc. David, mindful of the noble actions which, through God's assistance, he had achieved in his youth, beseeches him not to desert his servant, when persecuted by a rebellious son, in his old age. The weakness and temptations peculiar to that time of life, render this a petition necessary for all to make, before we are overtaken by it. The church findeth but too much occasion to make the same, now that she is sunk in years; when faith languisheth, charity waxeth cold, and the infirmities of a spiritual old age are coming fast upon her.—*George Horne.*

Verse 9.—"*Cast me not off.*" God had cast off his predecessor, Saul, and things looked as if he now meant to cast *him* off. His people also seemed disposed, by their joining with Absolom, to cast him off: hence the force of the petition.—*Andrew Fuller.*

Verse 9.—"*Forsake me not when my strength faileth.*" Neither will Christ forsake his church in the latter days of its age, when the weakness of faith becomes more prevalent.—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 9.—"*Forsake me not when my strength faileth.*" June 28. This day I enter on my eighty-sixth year. I now find I grow old: (1) My sight is decayed, so that I cannot read a small print, unless in a strong light. (2) My strength is decayed, so that I walk much slower than I did some years since. (3) My memory of names, whether of persons or places, is decayed, till I stop a little to recollect them. What I should be afraid of, is, if I took thought for the morrow, that my body should weigh down my mind, and create either stubbornness, by the decrease of my understanding, or peevishness by the

increase of bodily infirmities; But thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God.—*John Wesley.*

Verse 11.—All kinds of distresses are obnoxious to the worst of misjudgings from malevolent minds. The sufferings of Christ produced this censorious scoff, "Let God deliver him, if he will have him." (Matt. xxvii. 43.) David's trouble easily induced his adversaries to conclude that "*God had forsaken him, and that there was none to deliver him.*" But in troubles of this nature, where especially there are frightful complainings against themselves, men are more easily drawn out to be peremptory in their uncharitable judgments concerning them, because the trouble itself is somewhat rare, and apt to beget hideous impressions, and, withal, the vent which the afflicted parties give by their bemoaning of their estate, in hope to ease themselves thereby, is but taken as a testimony against themselves, and the undoubted echoes of their real feelings. —*Richard Gilpin* (1625—1700), *in* "*Dæmonologia Sacra; or, a Treatise of Satan's Temptations.*" [In Nichol's Series of Puritan Divines.]

Verse 13.—"*Let them be confounded,*" etc. Let them, who were so wicked that they never hoped anything good of me, *be confounded* by the evidence of the blessings which manifestly fall upon me; and, *let them fail*, the grounds of their abuse being taken away, as a fire fails when the fagots are removed.—*Gerhohus.*

Verse 13.—"*Let them be confounded,*" etc. By the law of retaliation (*talio*), he might have said: "Be thou an adversary to their souls, and seek their hurt." Nothing of this is hinted at: his only desire is that they may be confounded and fail, that they may be covered with disgrace and shame. He seeks nothing beyond the frustration of their attempts, that they may begin to be ashamed, and have no cause for boasting that they came off victorious.—*Musculus.*

Verse 13.—Shame ariseth from utter disappointments. If hope deferred causeth shame, then much more hope destroyed. When a man sees his hopes quite cut off, so that he can no way reach the thing he looked for, shame takes hold of him strongly.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 13.—"*That are adversaries to my soul.*" That hated him with a diabolical hatred, as the devil hates the souls of men, and who has his name *Satan* from the word here used. All wicked men are Satans, full of enmity against God and all good men; and such were David's enemies, spiteful and malicious, and nothing would satisfy them but his life.—*John Gill.*

Verse 14.—"*But I will hope continually.*" Behold, O Lord, I have prayed to thee, and I am comforted. Hope has thus taught me. I am glad; because in thee I have trusted, I shall never be confounded. Sorrow returned, equipped with vast array, fortified at all points with swords and spears, and with great clamour beleaguered my city. The din of his horsemen terrified me; and, standing at the gates, he commanded silence, and thus loudly spake: "Behold the man who trusted in God; who said, I shall not be confounded for ever; who took hope for a consoler." And, when he observed me blushing at these words, he drew nearer, and said: "Where are the promises which were thy trust? Where the consolation? Where the deliverance? What have thy tears availed thee? What help have thy prayers brought thee from heaven? Thou hast cried, and no one has answered; thou hast wept, and who have been moved with pity for thee? Thou hast called upon thy God, and he has been silent. Thou hast prayed to him, and he has hidden himself from thee: there has come no voice nor sound. . . . Arise, therefore, and flee for help to man, that he may free thee from thy prison." With these words, there arose such a din of arms in the camp—such a clamour of men and sounding of trumpets—that I could hardly keep up heart; and, unless my beloved Hope had brought me help, Sorrow would have seized and carried me off in chains to his own place. Comes Hope to me, gleaming in divine brightness, and,

smiling, said: "O soldier of Christ, how is thy heart? What is this struggle in thy mind?" At these words, I began to blush. "Fear not," she said, "Evil shall not capture thee; thou shalt never perish. Behold, I am with thee, to deliver thee. Dost thou not know what is written (Psalm xii.), 'The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.' As one of the foolish women hath this Sorrow spoken; never shall he be able to persuade thee that there is no God, or that God does not exercise a providence over all."—*Girolamo Savonarola.* 1452—1498.

Verse 14.—"*And I will always hope, and add to* (literally, *add upon*, accumulate, increase) *all thy praise.*" To all thy praise which I have uttered hitherto, I will continue still to add.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 14.—"*I will expect continually.*" But what did he *expect?* That for which he prayed in the ninth verse—the preservation of his prosperity, the presence and the help of God to the very end of life. Wherefore, he adds, *continually*, in perpetuity, in the time of old age—*usque ad mortem.*—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 14.—As there is no end to the lovingkindness of Jehovah, there should be none to our gratitude. The hope of a Christian enableth him to be thankful, even in the dark season of affliction.—*Mrs. Thomson.*

Verse 15.—The "*righteousness*" of God, here mentioned, includes not only the rectitude of his nature, and the equity of his proceedings, but likewise that everlasting righteousness which his Son hath brought in for our justification. God's *righteousness* and *salvation* are here joined together; and, therefore, let no man think to put them asunder, or expect salvation without righteousness. —*Mrs. Thomson.*

Verse 15.—"*I know not the numbers.*" David began his arithmetic, in the 14th verse, with *addition*: "I will yet praise thee more and more;" but he is fairly beaten in this first rule of sacred mathematics. His calculation fails him, the mere enumeration of the Lord's mercies overwhelms his mind: he owns his inadequacy. Reckon either by time, by place, or by value, and the salvation of God baffles all powers of estimation.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 16.—"*I will go.*" The word *to go* must be here taken in the sense of going to battle against enemies. This, he says, he will do, trusting not to his own, but to the power of the Lord, his heart fired with the memory of the righteousness of God. So is it in another place: "Some trust in chariots, some in horses, but we in the name of our God."—*Musculus.*

Verse 16.—"*I will go in the strength of the Lord.*" The minister goes thus by realising this strength and depending on it. In this strength he goes into the path of communion with God, into the fields of conflict, in the privacy of domestic life, and in all the walks of active life. His boast is in the *righteousness* of Christ; and he *mentions* this to God as the ground of his confidence, to himself as the spring of his comforts, to others as the hope of salvation. *Substance of Sermon by James Sherman. The first preached by him after his settlement at Surrey Chapel. September 4th*, 1836.

Verse 16.—"*The strengths of the Lord God.*" The power of God is expressed in the plural number, to show the greatness of it, which is as a garrison to the believer.—*John Gill.*

Verse 16.—"*I will go in the strength of the Lord.*" The phrase, *to go in*, or, *with the strengths of God*, does not teach us that he *would go* by means of them, by their help and assistance, as many have thought, *first*, because the word is used to signify the illustrious and mighty deeds of God; *secondly*, because it denotes the *subject* of praise; but *to go with the strengths of Jehovah*, as the rendering ought to be . . . is *to go* as if girt with his former deeds of power—girt with them as if with the *material* of praise.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 17.—"*O God, thou hast taught me from my youth.*" Whence was it

that David understood "more than the ancients"? (Psalm cxix. 100.) He had a Father to teach him; God was his instructor. Many a child of God complains of ignorance and dulness; remember this, thy Father will be thy tutor; he hath promised to give "his Spirit to lead thee into all truth" (John vi. 13); and God doth not only inform the understanding, but incline the will; he doth not only teach us what we should do, but enables us to do it. (Ezekiel xxxvi. 27): "I will cause you to walk in my statutes." What a glorious privilege is this, to have the star of the word pointing us to Christ, and the loadstone of the Spirit drawing!—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 17.—"*Thou hast taught me from my youth.*" If you ask me what were the ways by which David was taught, I might ask you what they were not. . . . . God taught him by his shepherd's crook; and by the rod and sceptre of a king he taught him. He taught him by the shouts of the multitude—"Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands;" and he taught him just as much, if not more, by the contempt he met in the court of the Philistines. He taught him by the arrows of Jonathan, levelled in friendship, and he taught him by the javelin of Saul levelled at his life. He taught him by the faithlessness of Abiathar, and the faithlessness of even his faithful Joab; and he taught him by the faithfulness of Abishai, and the faithfulness of Mephibosheth; and, let me add too, by the rebellion of Absalom, and the selfishness of Adonijah; they were all means, by which the Lord taught this his servant. And be assured, you that are under his teaching, there is nothing in your lives, but he can teach you by it: by comforts and crosses, by your wounds and your healings, by what he gives and by what he takes away. He unteaches his child, that he may teach him; shows him his folly, that he may make him wise; strips him of his vain confidence, that he may give him strength; makes him know that he is nothing, that he may show him that he has all in the Lord—in Jesus his Beloved one.—*James Harrington Evans.*

Verse 17.—"*Thou hast taught me from my youth.*" Youth needs a teacher that it may embrace virtue. Seneca says, *Virtue is a hard thing to youth, it needs a ruler and guide: vices are acquired without a master.* How prone he was in his boyhood and youth to vices, we may see in Psalm xxv. "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions." Jerome, in his Epistle to Nepotianus, says: "As fire in green wood is stifled, so wisdom in youth, impeded by temptations and concupiscence, does not unfold its brightness, unless by hard work, and steady application and prayer, the incentives of youth are inwardly repelled. Hence it is that almost all nations have provided good and wise teachers of the young. Among the Spartans, one was chosen from the Magistrates and Senators to be παιδονόμος, rector of the boys. . . . . At Athens there were twelve men named *Sophronistae*, elected by the suffrages of all the tribes, to moderate the manners of youth. . . . . God is the teacher of his servants. Plato says, οἰδὲν εἶναι θειότερον, that there is nothing more divine than the education of children. Of God the Father, or of the whole Trinity, Hannah, the mother of Samuel, says, 1 Samuel ii. 3: "The Lord is a God of knowledge;" [*Scientiarum*, Vulg.] that is, as the Chaldee has it, he knows all things. . . . . Socrates says, that he is *the mind of the universe.* Without him, therefore, all are demented; but with him, and through him, in a single moment they become wise. Philo, in his treatise of the sacrifice of Cain and Abel, says, Masters cannot fill the mind of their pupils as if they were pouring water into a vessel; but when God, the fountain of wisdom, communicates knowledge to the human race, he does it without delay, in the twinkling of an eye. . . . . *His anointing shall teach you of all things.*—1 John ii. 27.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 17.—"*From my youth.*" Is it such "a crown of glory" to be found old in the ways of righteousness? Do you then begin to be godly betimes; that, if you live in this world you may have this crown set upon your heads when you are ancient; for is it not better for you to be plants of God's house, than weeds upon the dunghill? Those that are wicked are but as

weeds upon a dunghill, but you that are godly are as plants in God's own orchard. In the last of the Romans, verse 7, we find that *Andronicus and Junia* are commended because they were in Christ before Paul: "They were in Christ before me." It is an honourable thing to be in Christ before others; this is honourable when you are young; and then going on in the ways of godliness all your young time, and so in your middle age, and till you come to be old.—*Jeremiah Burroughs.*

Verse 17.—"*Wondrous works.*" Observe that he calls the blessing of divine aid so often received in affliction, *wondrous works.* By this expression, he shows us, with what grievous perils he was tossed; then how he had been snatched from them by the hand of God, contrary to the expectation of all men. Therefore, God is wonderful among his saints. To this end the adversities of the saints tend, that they may show forth in them the wonderful works of God.—*Musculus.*

Verses 17, 18.—The integrity of our hearts and ways, in former walkings after God, and service for God, may by faith in Christ, as all in our justification, be pleaded. See also Isa. xxxviii. 3 and Psalm cxix. 10. The Lord himself maketh it to himself a motive to show mercy to his people (Isa. lxiii. 8; Jer. ii. 2); only we must use this plea more rarely and sparingly, in a self-denying way, in faith in Christ's righteousness, as made ours.—*Thomas Cobbet.*

Verse 18.—"*Now also when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not.*" God exalts pardoning grace to some more, and sanctifying grace to others: he is the God of grace. Those ships that have been in long voyages at sea, three or four years out, have gone through hot climates and cold, passed the equinoctial line again and again, and have run through many a difficulty, and great storms, and yet have been kept alive at sea, as they speak, when these shall meet one another at sea near the haven, how will they congratulate? And old disciples should do so, that God hath kept grace alive in their souls. And I would ask you how many thousand ships have you seen cast away before your eyes? How many that have made "shipwreck of faith and a good conscience," as the apostle speaks? This and that profession, that has run into this and that error damnable, or false opinions and teaching, though all of smaller moment; others that have struck upon quicksands of worldly preferments, and many split upon rocks, and yet you have been kept. This should move you to bless this your God, the God of grace, the more. Come, let me knock at your hearts; are none of you old professors, like old hollow oaks, who stand in the woods among professors still, and keep their stand of profession still, and go to ordinances, etc.; but the "rain they drink in," as the apostle's word is, serves to no other end but to rot them. "These are nigh unto cursing." Or, have you green fruits still growing on you, as quickly and lively affections to God and Christ, and faith and love, as at the first, and more abounding? O bless God you are so near the haven, and lift up your hearts, your redemption draws near; and, withal, raise your confidence, that that God of grace, who hath called you into his eternal glory, will keep you for it, and possess you of it shortly.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 18.—"*Forsake me not; until,*" etc. Apostacy in old age is fearful. He that climbs almost to the top of a tower, then slipping back, hath the greater fall. The patient almost recovered, is more deadly sick by a relapse. There were stars struck from heaven by the dragon's tail (Rev. xii. 4); they had better never have perched so high. The place where the Israelites fell into that great folly with the daughters of Moab, was in the plain, within the prospect of the Holy Land; they saw their inheritance, and yet fell short of it. So wretched is it for old men to fall near to their very entry of heaven, as old Eli in his indulgence (1 Sam. ii.); old Judah in his incest (Gen. xxxviii.); old David with Bathsheba; old Asa trusting in the physicians more than in God (2 Chron. xvi. 12); and old Solomon built the high places. Some have walked like cherubs in the midst of the stones of fire, yet have been cast as profane

out of God's mountain. Ez. xxviii. 14, 16. Thus the seaman passeth all the main, and suffers wreck in the haven. The corn often promiseth a plenteous harvest in the blade, and shrinks in the ear. You have trees loaden with blossoms, yet, in the season of expectation, no fruit. A comedy that holds well many scenes, and goes lamely off in the last act, finds no applause. "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke xvii. 32): think on that pillar of salt, that it may season thee.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 18.—"*Until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation,*" etc. Are there better preachers of the works of God to be found than hoary parents in the circle of their children; or grandparents in that of their grandchildren?—*Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 18.—

With years oppressed, with sorrows worn,
Dejected, harassed, sick, forlorn,
To thee, O God, I pray;
To thee my withered hands arise,
To thee I lift these failing eyes:
Oh, cast me not away!

Thy mercy heard my infant prayer;
Thy love, with all a mother's care,
Sustained my childish days:
Thy goodness watched my ripening youth,
And formed my heart to love thy truth,
And filled my lips with praise.

O Saviour! has thy grace declined?
Can years affect the Eternal Mind,
Or time its love destroy?
A thousand ages pass thy sight,
And all their long and weary flight
Is gone like yesterday.

Then, e'en in age and grief, thy name
Shall still my languid heart inflame,
And bow my faltering knee:
Oh, yet this bosom feels the fire,
This trembling hand and drooping lyre,
Have yet a strain for thee!

Yea, broken, tuneless, still, O Lord,
This voice, transported, shall record
Thy goodness, tried so long;
Till, sinking slow, with calm decay,
Its feeble murmurs melt away
Into a seraph's song.

Sir Robert Grant.

Verse 19.—"*O God, who is like unto thee!*" Either for greatness or goodness, for power or for mercy, for justice, truth, and faithfulness; for the perfections of his nature, or the works of his hands; and to be praised, reverenced, and adored, as he is.—*John Gill.*

Verse 19.—"*Who is like unto thee!*" מִי כָמוֹךָ, *Mi camocha.* God is alone: who can resemble him? He is eternal; he can have none *before*, and there can be none *after;* for, in the infinite *unity* of *trinity*, he is that eternal, unlimited, impartible, incomprehensible, and uncompounded, ineffable Being, whose *essence* is hidden from all created intelligences, and whose *counsels* cannot be fathomed by any creature that even his own hand can form. "WHO IS LIKE UNTO THEE!" will excite the wonder, amazement, praise, and adoration of angels and men to all eternity.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 20.—"*Thou shalt quicken me again,*" etc. Here Jerome triumpheth over the Jews, challenging them when this was ever verified in David, for he was never dead and quickened again; and, therefore, this must needs be expounded of him as that in Psalm xvi: "*Thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave;*" and to

"*the depths of the earth*," here, answer those words, Ephesians iv. 9, "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" Yet, this may also be applied to David, being figuratively understood, as a like speech of Hannah, 1 Samuel ii.—*John Mayer.*

Verse 20.—"*And thou shalt bring me up*," etc. This is an allusion to men who are unhappily fallen into a deep pit of water. The meaning is, Thou shalt draw me out of the extreme danger into which I am plunged, and wherein I shall perish without thy help.—*Thomas Fenton.*

Verse 21.—Greatness increasing with comfort, and comfort increasing with greatness; very rarely united.—*George Rogers.*

Verse 22.—"*With the psaltery.*" . . . "*with the harp.*" There was a typical signification in them; and upon this account they are not only rejected and condemned by the whole army of Protestant divines, as for instance, by Zuinglius, Calvin, Peter Martyr, Zepperus, Pareæus, Willet, Ainsworth, Ames, Calderwood, and Cotton; who do, with one mouth, testify against them, most of them expressly affirming that they are a part of the abrogated legal pedagogy; so that we might as well recall the incense, tapers, sacrifices, new moons, circumcision, and all the other shadows of the law into use again. But Aquinas himself also, though a Popish schoolman, pleads against them upon the same account, *quia aliquid figurabant*, and saith, the Church in his time did not use them, *ne videatur judaizare*, lest they should seem to judaize.—*Samuel Mather, on The Types.*

Verse 22.—"*Psaltery.*" . . . "*harp.*" Suppose singing with instruments were not typical, but only an external solemnity of worship, fitted to the solace of the outward senses of children under age, such as the Israelites were in the Old Testament (Gal. iv. 1, 2, 3); yet now, in the grown age of the heirs of the New Testament, such external pompous solemnities are ceased, and no external worship reserved, but such as holdeth forth simplicity and gravity; nor is any voice now to be heard in the church of Christ, but such as is significant and edifying by signification (1 Cor. xiv. 10, 11, 26), which the voice of instruments is not.—*John Cotton*, 1585—1652.

Verse 22.—"*Holy One of Israel.*" This name of God occurs in the Psalms only in two other places, lxxviii. 41; lxxxix. 18; these last two being, according to Delitzsch, older Psalms than this. In Isaiah, this name of God occurs thirty times; in Habakkuk once; in Jeremiah (who may have adopted it from Isaiah) twice (l. 29; li. 5).—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 23.—"*My lips*;" "*my soul.*" Hypocrites praise God with the "*lips*" only; but David joins the *soul* to the lips.—*William Nicholson.*

Verse 23.—"*Greatly.*" See how the word great is repeated. Great things done, verse 19; great troubles shown, verse 20; greatness increased, verse 21; and great rejoicing consequent thereon, in the present verse. In a great God, doing great things, it is meet greatly to rejoice.—*C. H. S.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Arguments used to induce the Lord to hear, drawn, I. From his *justice* and *equity*: "Deliver me in thy righteousness." II. From his *word* and *promise*: 'Thou hast given commandment," etc. III. From his *power*: "Thou art my rock," etc. IV. From his *relation* to him. 'My God, my hope." V. From the *qualities* of his *adversaries*: "They were wicked, unrighteous, and cruel." VI. From his *confidence*: "Thou art my hope." VII. From his *gracious providence*: "By thee have I been holden up," etc. VIII. From his *thankful heart*: "My praise shall be continually,' etc. IX. He had *none to trust to* but God: "Thou art my refuge."—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 1.—Faith is a present act; faith is a personal act, faith deals only with God, faith knows what she is about, faith kills her fears by prayer.

Verse 2.—An appeal. I. To the power of God: "Deliver me." II. To the faithfulness of God: "In thy righteousness." III. To the providence of God: "Cause me to escape." IV. To the condescension of God: "Incline thine ear." V. To the mercy of God: "Save me."

Verse 2.—*Cause me to escape.* From whom? From what? How? By what power? For what end?

Verse 3.—(First two clauses.) The believer abiding in God and continually resorting to him.

Verse 3.—(Third clause.) A command based on the divine promise, clothed with divine power, addressed to all necessary agencies, and embracing all exigencies.

Verse 4.—I. When God is for us, the wicked are against us. II. When the wicked are against us, God is for us.

Verse 5.—God the essence of hope and faith.

Verse 7 (*first clause*) may be accommodated to, I. *The Saviour.* II. *The Saint.* He is a *wonder*, in reference to (1) What he once was; (2) What he now is; (3) What he will hereafter be. III. *The Sinner* is "a wonder unto many;" a wonder to three worlds: to (1) angels; (2) saints; (3) devils and lost souls.—*Warwell Fenn.* 1830.

Verse 7.—Consider the text, with reference to *David*, to *Christ*, and to the *Christian.* I. With reference to *David.* 1. David was a wonder as a man. 2. As a king. 3. As a servant of God. II. With respect to *Christ.* 1. Christ was a wonder in his person. 2. In his life. 3. In his miracles. 4. In his teaching. 5. In his sufferings. 6. In his ascension and mediatorial glory. III. With regard to the *Christian.* 1. The Christian is a wonder to himself. 2. To the world. 3. To wicked spirits. 4. To the angels in heaven.—*John Cawood.* 1830.

Verse 8.—I. What? filled with what?—murmurings? doubts? fears? No! Praise. My own?—of men? No. "*Thy* praise." "*Thy* honor." II. When? "All the day." 1. The whole day. 2. Every day; a good preparation for heaven.

Verse 9.—There are some peculiar circumstances of old age which render this blessing—the favour and presence of God—necessary. I. Old age is a time of but little natural enjoyment, as Barzillai acknowledged. 2 Sam. xix. 35. II. It is a time of life in which the troubles of life are often known to increase. III. Old age is a time in which the troubles of life not only increase, but become less tolerable. IV. Old age is a time that ought to command respect, and does so among dutiful children and all serious Christians: but it is often known to be attended with neglect. This is the case especially where they are poor and dependent. It has been the case where public characters have lost their youthful vivacity, and the brilliancy of their talents.—*A. Fuller.*

Verse 9.—There is, I. Fear, mixed with faith. 1. Natural to old age. 2. Suggested by the usage of the world. II. Faith, mixed with fear: "Cast me not," etc. 1. Old age is not a sin. 2. It is a crown of glory if found, etc.

Verses 11, 12.—Two great lies and two sweet prayers.

Verses 13, 14.—I. What the wicked gain by opposing the righteous: "Let them," etc., *verse* 13.—II. What the righteous gain from being opposed by them,—*verse* 14: "But I," etc.

Verse 14.—See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 998: "More and More."

Verse 15.—I. The determination avowed. 1. To recount the instances of the divine faithfulness in his deliverances. 2. To recount them publicly: "My mouth," etc. 3. Constantly: "All the day." II. The reason assigned: "For I know not," etc. "Eternity's too short to utter all thy praise.' Therefore, I begin it now, and will continue it.

Verse 16.—I. The resolution: "I will go." II. The reservation: "Thy strength only—thy righteousness only."

Verse 17.—"*O God, thou hast taught me.*" None but God can teach us experimentally; and the lessons he teaches are always useful and important. He teaches all his scholars to know themselves—their depravity, poverty, and slavery. He teaches them his law—its purity, claims, and penalty. He teaches them his gospel—its fulness, freeness, and sensibility. He teaches them to know himself; as a reconciled God, as their Father and faithful friend. His teaching is accompanied with power and authority. We may know divine teaching by its effects: it always produces humility—they sit at his feet; dependence upon him; abhorrence of sin; love to God as a teacher; obedience to the lessons taught; thirst for further attainments; and it brings us daily to Jesus.—*James Smith.*

Verse 18.—The peculiar testimony of pious old age, what it is based upon, to whom it should be directed, and what we may hope from it.

Verse 19.—A sermon might be instructively worked out upon "the high things of God."

Verse 20.—I. The future benefit of present trials: "Hereafter," said Æneas to his shipwrecked companions, "it will delight us to think of these things." II. The present benefit of future mercies: "Glory to thee for all the grace we have not tasted yet."

Verse 22.—A choice subject for song—"thy truth," which may mean either doctrinal truth, or the attribute of faithfulness, its manifestation in history, and in our own experience.

Verses 22, 23.—I. The soul of music: Not in the instrument, or the voice, but in the soul. "I will sing with the understanding also." "Making melody in the heart," etc. II. The music of the soul. The "soul which thou hast redeemed." Redempton is the music of souls once lost. Their only song in heaven.

Verse 24.—How to make familiar talk edifying and useful.

WORK UPON THE SEVENTY-FIRST PSALM.

Hieronymi Savonarolæ Ferrariensis Meditationes in Psalmos—Miserere—In Te Domine Speravi, et Qui Regis Israel [12mo. Leyden: 1633].

PSALM LXXII.

TITLE.—*A Psalm* for Solomon.—*The best linguists affirm that this should be rendered,* of *or* by *Solomon. There is not sufficient ground for the rendering* for. *It is pretty certain that the title declares Solomon to be the author of the Psalm, and yet from verse* 20 *it would seem that David uttered it in prayer before he died. With some diffidence we suggest that the spirit and matter of the Psalm are David's, but that he was too near his end to pen the words, or cast them into form; Solomon, therefore, caught his dying father's song, fashioned it into goodly verse, and, without robbing his father, made the Psalm his own. It is, we conjecture, the Prayer of David, but the Psalm of Solomon. Jesus is here, beyond all doubt, in the glory of his reign, both as he now is, and as he shall be revealed in the latter-day glory.*

DIVISION.—*We shall follow the division suggested by Alexander. "A glowing description of the reign of Messiah as righteous, verses* 1—7*; universal, verses* 8—11*; beneficent, verses* 12—14*; and perpetual, verses* 15—17*; to which are added a doxology, verses* 18, 19*; and a postscript, verse* 20."

EXPOSITION.

GIVE the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.

2 He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.

3 The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.

4 He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

5 They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.

6 He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers *that* water the earth.

7 In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.

1. "*Give the king thy judgments, O God.*" The right to reign was transmitted by descent from David to Solomon, but not by that means alone: Israel was a theocracy, and the kings were but the viceroys of the greater King; hence the prayer that the new king might be enthroned by divine right, and then endowed with divine wisdom. Our glorious King in Zion hath all judgment committed unto him. He rules in the name of God over all lands. He is king "Dei Gratia" as well as by right of inheritance. "*And thy righteousness unto the king's son.*" Solomon was both king and king's son; so also is our Lord. He has power and authority in himself, and also royal dignity given him of his Father. He is the righteous king; in a word, he is "the Lord our righteousness." We are waiting till he shall be manifested among men as the ever-righteous Judge. May the Lord hasten in his own time the long-looked-for day. Now wars and fightings are even in Israel itself, but soon the dispensation will change, and David, the type of Jesus warring with our enemies, shall be displaced by Solomon the prince of peace.

2. "*He shall judge thy people with righteousness.*" Clothed with divine authority, he shall use it on the behalf of the favoured nation, for whom he

shall show himself strong, that they be not misjudged, slandered, or in any way treated maliciously. His sentence shall put their accusers to silence, and award the saints their true position as the accepted of the Lord. What a consolation to feel that none can suffer wrong in Christ's kingdom: he sits upon the great white throne, unspotted by a single deed of injustice, or even mistake of judgment: reputations are safe enough with him. "*And thy poor with judgment.*" True wisdom is manifest in all the decisions of Zion's King. We do not always understand his doings, but they are always right. Partiality has been too often shown to rich and great men, but the King of the last and best of monarchies deals out even-handed justice, to the delight of the poor and despised. Here we have the poor mentioned side by side with the king. The sovereignty of God is a delightful theme to the poor in spirit; they love to see the Lord exalted, and have no quarrel with him for exercising the prerogatives of his crown. It is the fictitious wealth which labours to conceal real poverty, which makes men cavil at the reigning Lord, but a deep sense of spiritual need prepares the heart loyally to worship the Redeemer King. On the other hand, the King has a special delight in the humbled hearts of his contrite ones, and exercises all his power and wisdom on their behalf, even as Joseph in Egypt ruled for the welfare of his brethren.

3. "*The mountains shall bring peace to the people.*" Thence, aforetime, rushed the robber bands which infested the country; but now the forts there erected are the guardians of the land, and the watchmen publish far and near the tidings that no foe is to be seen. Where Jesus is there is peace, lasting, deep, eternal. Even those things which were once our dread, lose all terror when Jesus is owned as monarch of the heart: death itself, that dark mountain, loses all its gloom. Trials and afflictions, when the Lord is with us, bring us an increase rather than a diminution of peace. "*And the little hills, by righteousness.*" Seeing that the rule of the monarch was just, every little hill seemed clothed with peace. Injustice has made Palestine a desert; if the Turk and Bedouin were gone, the land would smile again; for even in the most literal sense, justice is the fertilizer of lands, and men are diligent to plough and raise harvests when they have the prospect of eating the fruit of their labours. In a spiritual sense, peace is given to the heart by the righteousness of Christ; and all the powers and passions of the soul are filled with a holy calm, when the way of salvation, by a divine righteousness, is revealed. Then do we go forth with joy, and are led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills break forth before us into singing.

4. "*He shall judge the poor of the people.*" He will do them justice, yea, and blessed be his name, more than justice, for he will delight to do them good. "*He shall save the children of the needy.*" Poor, helpless things, they were packhorses for others, and paupers themselves, but their King would be their protector. Happy are God's poor and needy ones; they are safe under the wing of the Prince of Peace, for he will save them from all their enemies. "*And shall break in pieces the oppressor.*" He is strong to smite the foes of his people. Oppressors have been great breakers, but their time of retribution shall come and they shall be broken themselves. Sin, Satan, and all our enemies must be crushed by the iron rod of King Jesus. We have, therefore, no cause to fear, but abundant reason to sing—

> "All hail the power of Jesus' name!
> Let angels prostrate fall;
> Bring forth the royal diadem,
> And crown him Lord of all."

It is much better to be poor than to be an oppressor; for both the needy and their children find an advocate in the heavenly Solomon, who aims all his blows at haughty ones, and rests not till they are utterly destroyed.

5. "*They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure.*" And well they may. Such righteousness wins the cheerful homage of the poor and the godly;

and strikes dismay into the souls of unrighteous oppressors; so that all through the lands, both good and bad are filled with awe. Where Jesus reigns in power men must render obeisance of some sort. His kingdom, moreover, is no house of cards, or dynasty of days; it is as lasting as the lights of heaven; days and nights will cease before he abdicates his throne. Neither sun nor moon as yet manifest any failure in their radiance, nor are there any signs of decrepitude in the kingdom of Jesus; on the contrary, it is but in its youth, and is evidently the coming power, the rising sun. Would to God that fresh vigour were imparted to all its citizens to push at once the conquests of Immanuel to the uttermost ends of the earth. "*Throughout all generations*" shall the throne of the Redeemer stand. Humanity shall not wear out the religion of the Incarnate God. No infidelity shall wither it away, nor superstition smother it; it shall rise immortal from what seemed its grave; as the true phœnix, it shall revive from its ashes! As long as there are men on earth Christ shall have a throne among them. Instead of the fathers shall be the children. Each generation shall have a regeneration in its midst, let Pope and Devil do what they may. Even at this hour we have before us the tokens of his eternal power; since he ascended to his throne, eighteen hundred years ago, his dominion has not been overturned though the mightiest of empires have gone like visions of the night. We see on the shore of time the wrecks of the Cæsars, the relics of the Moguls, and the last remnants of the Ottomans. Charlemagne, Maximilian, Napoleon, how they flit like shadows before us! They were and are not; but Jesus for ever is. As for the houses of Hohenzollern, Guelph, or Hapsburg, they have their hour; but the Son of David has all hours and ages as his own.

6. "*He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass.*" Blessings upon his gentle sway! Those great conquerors who have been the scourges of mankind have fallen like the fiery hail of Sodom, transforming fruitful lands into deserts: but he with mild, benignant influence softly refreshes the weary and wounded among men, and makes them spring up into newness of life. Pastures mown with the scythe, or shorn by the teeth of cattle, present, as it were, so many bleeding stems of grass, but when the rain falls it is balm to all these wounds, and it renews the verdure and beauty of the field; fit image of the visits and benedictions of "the consolation of Israel." My soul, how well it is for thee to be brought low, and to be even as the meadows eaten bare and trodden down by cattle, for then to thee shall the Lord have respect; he shall remember thy misery, and with his own most precious love restore thee to more than thy former glory. Welcome Jesus, thou true *Bien-aimé*, the Well-beloved, thou art far more than Titus ever was—the Delight of Mankind. "*As showers that water the earth.*" Each crystal drop of rain tells of heavenly mercy which forgets not the parched plains: Jesus is all grace, all that he does is love, and his presence among men is joy. We need to preach him more, for no shower can so refresh the nations. Philosophic preaching mocks men as with a dust shower, but the gospel meets the case of fallen humanity, and happiness flourishes beneath its genial power. Come down, O Lord, upon my soul, and my heart shall blossom with thy praise:—

> "He shall come down as still and light
> As scatter'd drops on genial field;
> And in his time who loves the right,
> Freely shall bloom, sweet peace her harvest yield."

7. "*In his days shall the righteous flourish.*" Beneath the deadly Upas of unrighteous rule no honest principles can be developed, and good men can scarcely live; but where truth and uprightness are on the throne, the best of men prosper most. A righteous king is the patron and producer of righteous subjects. None flourish under Nero but those who are monsters like himself: like will to like; and under the gentle Jesus the godly find a happy shelter. "*And abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.*" Where Jesus reigns he is known as the true Melchizedek, king both of righteousness and peace.

Peace based upon right is sure to be lasting, but no other will be. Many a so-called Holy Alliance has come to the ground ere many moons have filled their horns, because craft formed the league, perjury established it, and oppression was the design of it; but when Jesus shall proclaim the great Truce of God, he will ordain perpetual peace, and men shall learn war no more. The peace which Jesus brings is not superficial or shortlived; it is abundant in its depth and duration. Let all hearts and voices welcome the King of nations; Jesus the Good, the Great, the Just, the Ever-blessed.

8 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

9 They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.

10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.

11 Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.

8. "*He shall have dominion also from sea to sea.*" Wide spread shall be the rule of Messiah; only the Land's End shall end his territory: to the Ultima Thule shall his sceptre be extended. From Pacific to Atlantic, and from Atlantic to Pacific, he shall be Lord, and the oceans which surround each pole shall be beneath his sway. All other power shall be subordinate to his; no rival nor antagonist shall he know. Men speak of the Emperor of all the Russias, but Jesus shall be Ruler of all mankind. "*And from the river unto the ends of the earth.*" Start where you will, by any river you choose, and Messiah's kingdom shall reach on to the utmost bounds of the round world. As Solomon's realm embraced all the land of promise, and left no unconquered margin; so shall the Son of David rule all lands given him in the better covenant, and leave no nation to pine beneath the tyranny of the prince of darkness. We are encouraged by such a passage as this to look for the Saviour's universal reign; whether before or after his personal advent we leave for the discussion of others. In this Psalm, at least, we see a personal monarch, and he is the central figure, the focus of all the glory; not his servant, but himself do we see possessing the dominion and dispensing the government. Personal pronouns referring to our great King are constantly occurring in this Psalm; *he* has dominion kings fall down before *him*, and serve *him*; for *he* delivers, *he* spares, *he* saves, *he* lives, and daily is *he* praised.

9. "*They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him.*" Unconquered by arms, they shall be subdued by love. Wild and lawless as they have been, they shall gladly wear his easy yoke; then shall their deserts be made glad, yea, they shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. "*And his enemies shall lick the dust.*" If they will not be his friends, they shall be utterly broken and humbled. Dust shall be the serpent's meat; the seed of the serpent shall be filled therewith. Homage among Orientals is often rendered in the most abject manner, and truly no sign is too humiliating to denote the utter discomfiture and subjugation of Messiah's foes. Tongues which rail at the Redeemer deserve to lick the dust. Those who will not joyfully bow to such a prince richly merit to be hurled down and laid prostrate; the dust is too good for them, since they trampled on the blood of Christ.

10. "*The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents.*" Trade shall be made subservient to the purposes of mediatorial rule, merchant princes, both far and near, shall joyfully contribute of their wealth to his throne. Seafaring places are good centres from which to spread the gospel; and seafaring men often make earnest heralds of the cross. Tarshish of old was so far away, that to the eastern mind it was lost in its remoteness, and seemed to be upon the verge of the universe; even so far as imagination itself can travel, shall the Son of

David rule; across the blue sea shall his sceptre be stretched; the white cliffs of Britain already own him, the gems of the Southern Sea glitter for him, even Iceland's heart is warm with his love, Madagascar leaps to receive him; and if there be isles of the equatorial seas whose spices have as yet not been presented to him, even there shall he receive a revenue of glory. He has made many an islet to become a Holy Isle, and hence, a true Formosa. "*The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.*" Agriculture and pasturage shal contribute their share. Foreign princes from inland regions, as yet unexplored, shall own the all-embracing monarchy of the King of kings; they shall be prompt to pay their reverential tribute. Religious offerings shall they bring, for their King is their God. Then shall Arabia Felix be happy indeed, and the Fortunate Isles be more than fortunate. Observe, that true religion leads to generous giving; we are not taxed in Christ's dominions, but we are delighted to offer freely to him. It will be a great day when kings will do this: the poor widow has long ago been before them, it is time that they followed; their subjects would be sure to imitate the royal example. This free-will offering is all Christ and his church desire; they want no forced levies and distraints, let all men give of their own free will, kings as well as commoners; alas! the rule has been for kings to give their subjects' property to the church, and a wretched church has received this robbery for a burnt offering; it shall not be thus when Jesus more openly assumes the throne.

11. "*Yea, all kings shall fall down before him.*" Personally shall they pay their reverence, however mighty they may be. No matter how high their state, how ancient their dynasty, or far-off their realms, they shall willingly accept him as their Imperial Lord. "*All nations shall serve him.*" The people shall be as obedient as the governors. The extent of the mediatorial rule is set forth by the two far-reaching *alls*, all kings and all nations: we see not as yet all things put under him, but since we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour in heaven, we are altogether without doubt as to his universal monarchy on earth. It is not to be imagined that an Alexander or a Cæsar shall have wider sway than the Son of God. "Every knee shall bow to him, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Hasten it, O Lord, in thine own time.

12 For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and *him* that hath no helper.

13 He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.

14 He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.

12. "*For he shall deliver the needy.*" Here is an excellent reason for man's submission to the Lord Christ; it is not because they dread his overwhelming power, but because they are won over by his just and condescending rule. Who would not fear so good a Prince, who makes the needy his peculiar care, and pledges himself to be their deliverer in times of need? "*When he crieth.*" He permits them to be so needy as to be driven to cry bitterly for help, but then he hears them, and comes to their aid. A child's cry touches a father's heart, and our King is the Father of his people. If we can do no more than cry it will bring omnipotence to our aid. A cry is the native language of a spiritually needy soul; it has done with fine phrases and long orations, and it takes to sobs and moans; and so, indeed, it grasps the most potent of all weapons, for heaven always yields to such artillery. "*The poor also, and him that hath no helper.*" The proverb says, "God helps those that help themselves;" but it is yet more true that Jesus helps those who cannot help themselves, nor find help in others. All helpless ones are under the especial care of Zion's compassionate King; let them hasten to put themselves in fellowship with him. Let them look to him, for he is looking for them.

13. "*He shall spare the poor and needy.*" His pity shall be manifested to them; he will not allow their trials to overwhelm them; his rod of correction shall fall lightly; he will be sparing of his rebukes, and not sparing in his consolations. "*And shall save the souls of the needy.*" His is the dominion of souls, a spiritual and not a worldly empire; and the needy, that is to say, the consciously unworthy and weak, shall find that he will give them his salvation. Jesus calls not the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He does not attempt the superfluous work of aiding proud Pharisees to air their vanity; but he is careful of poor Publicans whose eyes dare not look up to heaven by reason of their sense of sin. We ought to be anxious to be among these needy ones whom the Great King so highly favours.

14. "*He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence.*" These two things are the weapons with which the poor are assailed: both law and no law are employed to fleece them. The fox and the lion are combined against Christ's lambs, but the Shepherd will defeat them, and rescue the defenceless from their teeth. A soul hunted by the temptations of Satanic craft, and the insinuations of diabolical malice, will do well to fly to the throne of Jesus for shelter. "*And precious shall their blood be in his sight.*" He will not throw away his subjects in needless wars as tyrants have done, but will take every means for preserving the humblest of them. Conquerors have reckoned thousands of lives as small items; they have reddened fields with gore, as if blood were water, and flesh but manure for harvests; but Jesus, though he gave his own blood, is very chary of the blood of his servants, and if they must die for him as martyrs, he loves their memory, and counts their lives as his precious things.

15 And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; *and* daily shall he be praised.

16 There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and *they* of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.

17 His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and *men* shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.

15. "*And he shall live.*" *Vive le Roi!* O King! live for ever! He was slain, but is risen and ever liveth. "*And to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba.*" These are coronation gifts of the richest kind, cheerfully presented at his throne. How gladly would we give him all that we have and are, and count the tribute far too small. We may rejoice that Christ's cause will not stand still for want of funds; the silver and the gold are his, and if they are not to be found at home, far-off lands shall hasten to make up the deficit. Would to God we had more faith and more generosity. "*Prayer also shall be made for him continually.*" May all blessings be upon his head; all his people desire that his cause may prosper, therefore do they hourly cry, "Thy kingdom come." Prayer *for* Jesus is a very sweet idea, and one which should be for evermore lovingly carried out; for the church is Christ's body, and the truth is his sceptre; therefore we pray for him when we plead for these. The verse may, however, be read as "through him," for it is by Christ as our Mediator that prayer enters heaven and prevails. "Continue in prayer" is the standing precept of Messiah's reign, and it implies that the Lord will continue to bless. "*And daily shall he be praised.*" As he will perpetually show himself to be worthy of honour, so shall he be incessantly praised:—

> "For him shall constant prayer be made,
> And praises throng to crown his head;
> His name, like sweet perfume, shall rise
> With every morning's sacrifice."

16. "*There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains.*" From small beginnings great results shall spring. A mere handful in a place naturally ungenial shall produce a matchless harvest. What a blessing that there is a handful; "except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah;" but now the faithful are a living seed, and shall multiply in the land. "*The fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon.*" The harvest shall be so great that the wind shall rustle through it, and sound like the cedars upon Lebanon:—

> "Like Lebanon, by soft winds fann'd,
> Rustles the golden harvest far and wide."

God's church is no mean thing; its beginnings are small, but its increase is of the most astonishing kind. As Lebanon is conspicuous and celebrated, so shall the church be. "*And they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.*" Another figure. Christ's subjects shall be as plentiful as blades of grass, and shall as suddenly appear as eastern verdure after a heavy shower. We need not fear for the cause of truth in the land; it is in good hands, where the pleasure of the Lord is sure to prosper. "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." When shall these words, which open up such a vista of delight, be fulfilled in the midst of the earth?

17. "*His name shall endure for ever.*" In its saving power, as the rallying point of believers, and as renowned and glorified, his name shall remain for ever the same. "*His name shall be continued as long as the sun.*" While time is measured out by days, Jesus shall be glorious among men. "*And men shall be blessed in him.*" There shall be cause for all this honour, for he shall really and truly be a benefactor to the race. He himself shall be earth's greatest blessing; when men wish to bless others they shall bless in his name. "*All nations shall call him blessed.*" The grateful nations shall echo his benedictions, and wish him happy who has made them happy. Not only shall some glorify the Lord, but all; no land shall remain in heathenism; all nations shall delight to do him honour.

18 Blessed *be* the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.

19 And blessed *be* his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled *with* his glory: Amen, and Amen.

20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

18, 19. As Quesnel well observes, these verses explain themselves. They call rather for profound gratitude, and emotion of heart, than for an exercise of the understanding; they are rather to be used for adoration than for exposition. It is, and ever will be, the acme of our desires, and the climax of our prayers, to behold Jesus exalted King of kings and Lord of lords. He has done great wonders such as none else can match, leaving all others so far behind, that he remains the sole and only wonder-worker; but equal marvels yet remain, for which we look with joyful expectation. He is the Blessed God, and his name shall be blessed; his name is glorious, and that glory shall fill the whole earth. For so bright a consummation our heart yearns daily, and we cry "*Amen, and Amen.*"

20. "*The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.*" What more could he ask? He has climbed the summit of the mount of God; he desires nothing more. With this upon his lip, he is content to die. He strips himself of his own royalty and becomes only the "son of Jesse," thrice happy to subside into nothing before the crowned Messiah. Before his believing eye the reign of Jesus, like the sun, filled all around with light, and the holy soul of the man after God's own heart exulted in it, and sung his "Nunc dimittis:" "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!" We, too, will cease from all petitioning if it be granted to us to see the day of the Lord. Our blissful spirits will then have nothing further to do but for ever to praise the Lord our God.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—"*For Solomon.*" I shall but mention a threefold analogy between Christ and Solomon. (1.) In his *personal wisdom* (1 Kings iv. 29, 30); so Christ (Col. ii, 3); "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (2.) In the *glorious peace and prosperity of his kingdom*: the kingdom was peaceably settled in his hand. 1 Chron. xxii. 9; iv. 24, 25. And so he fell to the work of building the temple, as Christ doth the church; so Christ (Isa. ix. 6); he is the Prince of Peace, the great Peacemaker. Eph. ii. 14. (3.) In his *marriage with Pharaoh's daughter.* Some observe that the daughter of Pharaoh never seduced him: neither is there any mention made of the Egyptian idols. 1 Kings xi. 5, 7. In his other outlandish marriages he did sin; but *this* is mentioned as by way of special exception (1 Kings xi. 1); for she was a *proselyte*, and so it was no sin to marry her: and the love between her and Solomon is made a type of the love between Christ and the church. So Christ hath taken us Gentiles to be spouse unto him. Psalm xlv.—*Samuel Mather* (1626—1671), *in* "*The Figures or Types of the Old Testament.*"

Whole Psalm.—The Seventy-second Psalm contains a description of an exalted king, and of the blessings of his reign. These blessings are of such a nature as to prove that the subject of the Psalm must be a divine person. 1. His kingdom is to be everlasting. 2. Universal. 3. It secures perfect peace with God and goodwill among men. 4. All men are to be brought to submit to him through love. 5. In him all the nations of the earth are to be blessed; *i.e.*, as we are distinctly taught in Gal. iii. 16, it is in him that all the blessings of redemption are to come upon the world. The subject of this Psalm is, therefore, the Redeemer of the world.—*Charles Hodge, in "Systematic Theology."*—1871.

Whole Psalm.—This Psalm was penned by a king, it is dedicated to a king, and is chiefly intended concerning him who is "King of kings."—*Joseph Caryl, in a Sermon entitled "David's Prayer for Solomon."*

Whole Psalm.—Two Psalms bear *Solomon's* name in their titles. One of these is the Hundred and Twenty-seventh, the other is the Seventy-second; and here the traces of his pen are unequivocal. A mistaken interpretation of the note appended to it, "The prayers of David the Son of Jesse are ended," led most of the old commentators to attribute the Psalm to David, and to suppose that it is a prayer offered in his old age "for Solomon," as the peaceful prince who was to succeed him on the throne. However, it has long been known that the note in question refers to the whole of the preceding portion of the Psalter, much of which was written by Asaph and the sons of Korah; and there can be no doubt that the title can only be translated, "of Solomon." So clear are the traces of Solomon's pen that Calvin, whose sagacity in this kind of criticism has never been excelled, although he thought himself obliged, by the note at the end of the Psalm, to attribute the substance of it to David, felt Solomon's touch so sensibly, that he threw out the conjecture that the prayer was the father's, but that it was afterwards thrown into the lyrical form by the son. This is not the place for detailed exposition; I will, therefore, content myself with remarking that, properly speaking, the Psalm is not "for Solomon" at all. If it refers to him and his peaceful reign, it does so only in as far as they were types of the Person and Kingdom of the Prince of Peace. The Psalm, from beginning to end, is not only capable of being applied to Christ, but great part is incapable of being fairly applied to any other.—*William Binnie.*

Whole Psalm.—This is the fourth of those Psalms which predict the two natures of Christ. This Psalm admonishes us that we believe in Christ as perfect God, and perfect Man and King.—*Psalter of Peter Lombard* (—1164).

Whole Psalm.—That under the type of Solomon (to whom it is inscribed) the Messiah is "The King" of whom this Psalm treats, we have the consent, not only of the most eminent divines of modern times, and of the Fathers of the early Christian church, but of the ancient and most distinguished Jewish

expositors; of which reference, indeed, it contains the most conclusive internal evidence. And, as under a new type, so is the kingdom here presented to us in a new aspect, in marked contradistinction to its character as foreshadowed by its other great type, the Davidical: for the character of David's reign was conquest. He was "a man of war" (1 Chron. xxviii. 1—3); the appointed instrument for subjecting the enemies of God's people Israel, by whom they were put in undisturbed possession of the promised land. But the character of Solomon's reign was peace, the import of his name, succeeding to the throne after all enemies had been subdued, and governing the kingdom which David's wars had established (1 Kings ii. 12), the two types, respectively, of Christ as he is yet to be manifested at his next appearing; first revealed as David, as seen in the vision of that event (Rev. xix. 11): "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness *he doth judge and make war*," etc., subduing the Antichristian confederacy (verses 19—21), as before predicted in the Second Psalm, of this same confederacy: "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." And then, as Solomon, taking his throne, and extending the blessings of his kingdom of peace to the ends of the earth. David in the Second Psalm; Solomon in this.—*William De Burgh.*

Whole Psalm.—The reader is reminded of James Montgomery's hymn, beginning, "Hail to the Lord's Anointed;" it is a very beautiful versification of this Psalm, and will be found in "Our Own Hymn Book," No. 353.

Verse 1.—"*Give the king thy judgments, O God.*" Right and authority to execute judgment and justice. The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son.—*John Fry.*

Verse 1.—"*The king*" . . . . "*The king's son.*" I do not apprehend, with the generality of interpreters, that by "*The king*," and "*The king's son*," David means himself and his son, but *Solomon* only, to whom both the titles agree, as he was David's son, and anointed by him *king* during his lifetime.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 1.—"*The king*" . . . . "*The king's son.*" We see that our Lord is here termed both מֶלֶךְ, and בֶּן־מֶלֶךְ, being king himself, and also the son of a king; both as respects his human origin, having come forth from the stock of David, and also as to his divine origin; for the Father of the universe may, of course, be properly denominated King. Agreeably to this designation, we find on the Turkish coins the inscription: *Sultan, son of Sultan.*—*George Phillips.*

Verse 2.—"*Thy judgments.*" From whom does he seek these? O God, he says, give them. Therefore is it the gift of God that kings should judge righteously and observe justice. Moreover, he does not simply say, O God, give judgments to the king, and righteousness to the king's son; but *thy* judgments and *thy* righteousness. Grant them this grace, that what is just in thy sight they may judge. The world has its own judgments and its own righteousness, but deals in such a way that true righteousness is more oppressed than approved. Not such are the judgments and righteousness of God.—*Musculus.*

Verse 3.—"*The mountains shall bring peace to the people*," etc. Those who apply this Psalm to Solomon expound the distich thus; "That the steep mountains on the frontier, strongly garrisoned, shall secure the land from hostile invasion; and the hills, cleared of the banditti, which in the rude ages were accustomed to inhabit them, under the government of the king, intended in this Psalm, should be the peaceful seats of a useful, civilised peasantry," This sense is not ill expresssed in Mr. Merrick's translation:

> "Peace, from the fort-clad mountain's brow,
> Descending, bless the plains below;
> And justice from each rocky cell,
> Shall violence and fraud expel."

But so little of the Psalm is at all applicable to Solomon, and the greater part of it so exclusively belongs to the Messiah, that I think these mountains and hills allude to the nature of the land of Judæa; and the general sense is, that, in the times of the great king, the inhabitants of that mountainous region shall live in a state of peace and tranquility. The thing intended is the happy condition of the natural Israel, in the latter day restored to God's favour, and to the peaceful possession of their own land. It is a great confirmation of this sense, that "*righteousness*" is mentioned as the means of the peace which shall be enjoyed.—*Samuel Horsley.*

Verse 3.—"*The mountains shall bring peace to the people.*" It was, and still is, common in the East to announce good or bad news from the tops of mountains and other eminences. By this means acts of justice were speedily communicated to the remotest parts of the country. Thus, when Solomon decided the controversy between the two harlots, the decision was quickly known over all the land. See 1 Kings iii. 28.—*Alexander Geddes.*

Verse 3.—"*The mountains shall bring peace.*" The reference is to the fertility of the soil, which now is shown in an extraordinary way, when mountain summits, which are either oppressed with hopeless sterility or yield at a far inferior rate to the valleys, produce all things plentifully. And by this figure he signifies that this happiness of his kingdom shall not be the portion of a few only, but shall abound in all places and to all people, of every condition and of every age. No corner of the land, he affirms, shall be destitute of this fertility.—*Mollerus.*

Verse 3.—"*The mountains shall bring peace.*" You may be sure to have peace when your mountains shall bring forth peace; when those mountains, which heretofore were mountains of prey and hills of the robbers, shall be a quiet habitation; when peace shall not be walled up in cities, or fenced in by bulwarks, but the open fields and highways, the mountains and the hills shall yield it abundantly; under every hedge, and under every green tree, there shall you find it; when the cottagers and the mountaineers shall have their fill of it; when they shall eat and be satisfied, lie down and none shall make them afraid, then the blessing is universal: and this is the work of *righteousness.*—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 3.—The "*mountains*" and "*hills*" are not at all named as the most unfruitful places of the land, which they really were not, in Palestine, compare Deut. xxxiii. 15; Psalm cxlvii. 8, "Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains;" Psalm lxv. 12,—nor even because what is on them can be seen everywhere, and from all sides (*Tholuck*), compare against this, Joel iv. 18, "The mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk," Isa. lv. 12,—but, as being the most prominent points and ornaments of the country, and, therefore, as representing it, well fitted to express the thought that the country shall be *everywhere* filled with peace.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 4.—"*The children of the needy.*" The phrase, *the children of the afflicted*, is put for *the afflicted*, an idiom quite common in Hebrew; and a similar form of expression is sometimes used by the Greeks, as when they say υἱοὺς ἰατρῶν, *the sons of physicians* for *physicians.*—*John Calvin.*

Verse 5.—

> The lofty glory of the Flavian family shall remain,
> Enduring like the sun and stars.
>
> *Martial.*—Bk. ix. Epig. 7.

Verse 6.—"*He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass,*" etc. This is spoken and promised of Christ, and serves to teach us that Christ coming to his church and people, by the gracious influences of his Holy Spirit, is most useful and refreshing to their souls, like showers of rain to the dry ground, or a meadow

newly cut to make it spring again. Christless souls are like the dry ground; without the moisture of saving grace their hearts are hard; neither rods, mercies, nor sermons, make impression upon them. Why? They are without Christ, the fountain of grace and spiritual influences. Before the fall man's soul was like a well-watered garden, beautiful, green, and fragrant; but by his apostacy from God, in Adam our first head, the springs of grace and holiness are quite dried up in his soul; and there is no curing of this drought but by the soul's union with a new head; to wit, Christ our second Adam, who has the Spirit given him without measure for the use of all his members. Now, when we are united by faith to Christ, our Head of influences, the dry land is turned into water-springs; Christ "comes down as the rain" by his Spirit of regeneration, and brings the springs of grace into the soul. He is the first and immediate receptacle of the Holy Spirit, and all regenerating and sanctifying influences, and out of his fulness we must by faith receive them. And when at any time the springs of grace are interrupted in the soul by sin or unbelief, so as the ground turns dry, the plants wither, and the things which remain are ready to die, the soul hath need to look up to Jesus Christ to come down with new showers upon the thirsty ground and decayed plants.

1. As the rain is the free gift of God to the dry ground, it comes free and cheap to poor and rich, small and great, and costs them nothing: so Christ with his blessings is God's free gift to a dry and perishing world; for which we should be continually thankful. 2. As nothing can stop the falling of the rain; so nothing can hinder Christ's gracious influences, when he designs to awake, convince, or soften a hard heart. When those showers do fall on sinners, the most obstinate will must yield, and cry, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? 3. As the rain is most necessary and suitable to the dry ground, and to the various plants it produceth, and also to the different parts of every plant or tree—such as the root, trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, and fruit; so Christ is absolutely necessary, and his influence most suitable to all his people's souls, and to every faculty of them—the understanding, will, memory, and affections; and to all their different graces, faith, love, repentance, etc.; to root and establish them, strengthen and confirm them, quicken and increase them, cherish and preserve them. 4. As the rain comes in divers ways and manners to the earth, sometimes with cold winds and tempests, thunders and lightnings, and at other times with calmness and warmth; so Christ comes to sinners, sometimes with sharp convictions and legal terrors, and sometimes with alluring invitations and promises. 5. O how pleasant are the effects of rain to languishing plants, to make them green and beautiful, lively and strong, fragrant and beautiful! So the effects of Christ's influences are most desirable to drooping souls, for enlightening and enlivening them, for confirming and strengthening them, for comforting and enlarging them, for appetising and satisfying them, transforming and beautifying them. A shower from Christ would soon make the church, though withered, turn green and beautiful, and to send forth a smell as of a field that the Lord hath blessed; and likewise some drops of this shower, falling down upon the languishing graces of communicants, would soon make them vigorous and lively in showing forth their Saviour's death at his table.—*John Willison.*

Verse 6.—There cannot be a more lively image of a flourishing condition than what is conveyed to us in these words. The grass which is forced by the heat of the sun, before the ground is well prepared by rains, is weak and languid, and of a faint complexion; but when clear shining succeeds the gentle showers of spring, the field puts forth its best strength, and is more beautifully arrayed than ever Solomon in all his glory.—*Thomas Sherlock.* 1678–1761.

Verse 6.—"*He shall come down,*" ד. There is a fourfold descending of Christ which the Scripture mentions. I. His incarnation, the manifestation of himself in the flesh. II. The abasing himself in condition; he did not only assume human flesh, but all the natural infirmities of our flesh. III. The

subjecting of himself to death. IV. The distillations of his grace and spiritual blessings upon his church.—*Ralph Robinson.*

Verse 6 (*first clause*).—Some render this "like dew on the fleece." The mysterious fleece of Gideon, which, on being exposed to the air, is first of all filled with the dew of heaven while all the ground around it is quite dry, and which afterwards becomes dry while the earth is watered, pictures to us, according to the old divines, that the dew of Heaven's grace was poured out upon Judæa at the time when all the rest of the world remained in barrenness and ignorance of God; but that now, by a strange alteration, this same Judæa lies in dryness and forgetfulness of God, while, on the contrary, all the other nations of the earth are inundated with the dew of heavenly grace.—*Pasquier Quesnel.*

Verse 6.—"*Upon the mown grass.*" The Hebrew word used here hath a double signification. It signifies a shorn fleece of wool, and it signifies a meadow newly mown. This hath occasioned divers readings. Some read it, He shall come down like the rain into a fleece of wool: so the Septuagint. They that follow this reading make it an allusion unto the dew that fell upon Gideon's fleece (Judges vi. 37—39), when all the land beside was dry, and, again, upon the rest of the land when the fleece was dry. Others read it according to our translation: "*He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass.*" This seems to me more agreeable to the meaning of the Holy Ghost; especially because of the clause following, which is added by way of explication: "*As showers that water the earth.*" "*As the showers,*" רְבִיבִים. Rain and showers differ only as less and more: rain signifies smaller showers, and showers signify greater rain. Deut. xxxii. 2. Rain falling in multitude of drops is called a shower. "*That water the earth.*" The word זַרְזִיף *zarziph*, which is here translated "*water,*" is only used in this place in all the Bible. It signifies to water by dispersion, to water by drops. The showers are dispersed in drops all over the face of the earth, in a very regular and artificial way. "God hath divided," saith Job, "a watercourse for the overflowings of water." Job xxxviii. 25. The rain is from the cloud spouted out by drops after such a manner that every part hath its share.—*Ralph Robinson.*

Verse 6.—"*The mown grass;*" literally, "*that which is shorn,*" whether *fleece* or *meadow*. In the former sense it occurs Jud. vi. 37, and so the older translators all take it, (Aq. ἐπὶ κουράν, LXX. and others ἐπὶ πλόκον, Jerome and Vulgate, *in vellus,*) probably with the idea that the reign of the monarch would be accompanied by signal tokens of the divine favour and blessing, like the dew upon Gideon's fleece; in the latter sense, the word is found Amos vii. 1; and this is indisputably its meaning here, as the parallel shows. The *mown* meadow is particularly mentioned, because the roots of the grass would be most exposed to the summer heat after the crop had been gathered in, and the effect would be most striking in the shooting of the young green blade after the shower.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 7.—"*Righteous.*" "*Peace.*" Do you ask what he is individually? The answer is, "King of Righteousness: "a being loving righteousness, working righteousness, promoting righteousness, procuring righteousness, imparting righteousness to those whom he saves, perfectly sinless, and the enemy and abolisher of all sin. Do you ask what he is practically, and in relation to the effect of his reign? The answer is, "King of Peace:" a sovereign whose kingdom is a shelter for all who are miserable, a covert for all who are persecuted, a resting-place for all who are weary, a home for the destitute, and a refuge for the lost.—*Charles Stanford.*

Verse 7.—"*Abundance of peace.*" Literally, "*multitude* of peace;" that is, the things which produce peace, or which indicate peace, will not be few, but numerous; they will abound everywhere. They will be found in towns and villages, and private dwellings; in the calm and just administration of the affairs of the State; in abundant harvests; in intelligence, in education, and

in undisturbable industry; in the protection extended to the rights of all.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 7.—"*So long as the moon endureth.*" It does not necessarily follow from these words that the moon will ever cease to exist. The idea, commonly held, of the annihilation of the starry firmament is without foundation in Scripture. Such an idea has a pernicious influence on the human mind, inasmuch as it leads men to depreciate that which bears in such striking character the stamp and impress of the divine glory.—*Frederic Fysh.*

Verse 8.—"*From the river.*" There are many modern interpreters who, from the mention of the "*river*"—namely, the river Euphrates—in the other clause of the verse, think that the boundaries of the land of Palestine are here to be understood, that country being described as extending from the Red Sea to the Sea of Syria, otherwise called the Sea of the Philistines, and the Great Sea; and from the Euphrates to the Great Desert lying behind Palestine and Egypt. These are the limits of the Israelitish territory: the former, from the south to the west; the latter, from the north to the east. (Gen. xv. 18.) But, in this passage, there can scarcely be a doubt that by the "*river*"—to wit, the Euphrates—is indicated the extreme boundary of the earth towards the east. In a highly poetical, magnificent description, such as is given in this song, of a king exalted above all others, nothing can be conceived more inappropriate than saying that the dominions of such a king should be bounded by the limits of Palestine.—*Ernest F. C. Rosenmüller* (1768—1835), *in* "*The Biblical Cabinet*," vol. xxxii.

Verse 9.—"*They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him*," etc. This is equivalent to saying, *the wild Arabs, that the greatest conquerors could never tame*, shall bow before him, or become his vassals; nay, his enemies, and, consequently, these Arabs among the rest, "*shall lick the dust*," or court him with the most abject submissions.—*T. Harmer's Observations.*

Verse 9.—"*His enemies shall lick the dust.*" Bear in mind that it was a custom with many nations that, when individuals approached their kings, they kissed the earth, and prostrated their whole body before them. This was the custom especially throughout Asia. No one was allowed to address the Persian kings, unless he prostrated himself on the ground and kissed the footsteps of the king, as Xenophon records.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verses 9, 10.—"*Wilderness*," "*Tarshish*," "*Sheba.*" The most *uncivilized*, the most *distant*, and most *opulent* nations shall pay their homage to him.—*Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verses 9—11.—"*They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.*" They shall humble themselves under the mighty hand of Christ; they shall acknowledge and receive him as their Lord; they shall fear and reverence him as their King; they shall veil and bow to his sceptre; they shall put themselves, and all that is theirs, under Christ; they shall give themselves to the exaltation and setting up of Christ. "*The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.*" They shall consecrate their abilities to Christ's service; they shall communicate of their substance to the maintenance of Christ's church, and minister to the preservation and increase of Christ's kingdom. "*All kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.*" All shall adore and serve him as their king; all shall exalt and honour him, as loyal subjects, their heavenly sovereign; all persons, from the highest to the lowest, must serve the Lord Jesus, and study to make him glorious; grace works obedience in the hearts of princes, as well as in the hearts of beggars. The sun, as well as the stars, did obeisance unto Joseph in his vision; kings, as well as inferior persons, do obeisance unto Christ, under his kingdom and gospel.—*Alexander Grosse* (—1654), *in* "*Sweet and Soule-Perswading Inducements leading unto Christ*" 1632.

Verse 10. "*Tarshish*" was an old celebrated, opulent, cultivated, commercial city, which carried on trade in the Mediterranean, and with the seaports of Syria, especially Tyre and Joppa, and that it most probably lay on the extreme west of that sea. Was there then, in ancient times, any city in these parts which corresponded with these clearly ascertained facts? There was. Such was Tartessus in Spain, said to have been a Phœnician colony; a fact which of itself would account for its intimate connection with Palestine and the Biblical narratives.

As to the exact spot where Tartessis (so written originally) lay, authorities are not agreed, as the city had ceased to exist when geography began to receive attention; but it was not far from the Straits of Gibraltar, and near the mouth of the Guadalquivir, consequently at no great distance from the famous Granada of later days. The reader, however, must enlarge his notion beyond that of a mere city, which, how great soever, would scarcely correspond with the ideas of magnitude, affluence, and power, that the Scriptures suggest. The name, which is of Phœnician origin, seems to denote the district of south-western Spain, comprising the several colonies which Tyre planted in that country, and so being equivalent to what we might designate Phœnician Spain. We are not, however, convinced that the opposite coast of Africa was not included, so that the word would denote to an inhabitant of Palestine the extreme western parts of the world.—*J. R. Beard, in "A Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature."* 1866.

Verse 10.—"*The isles*," אִיִּים, only in the Psalter besides, Ps. xcvii. 1, where, and uniformly, so rendered. The word, however, denotes all habitable land as opposed to water (see Gen. x. 5, where first it occurs, with Isa. xlii. 15), and so "*maritime land*, whether the sea coast of continent or island" (Gesenius); especially the countries washed by the Mediterranean, and the remote coasts to the west of Palestine. So in the parallel prophecy, Isa. lx. 9, and xi. 11; xli. 1, 2; xlii. 10—12; xlix. 1, &c. Accordingly, "*The isles* shall wait for his law" (Isa. xlii. 4) is expounded in Matt. xii. 22—"In Him shall *the Gentiles* trust."—*William DeBurgh.*

Verse 10.—"*Sheba and Seba.*" There appear to have been two nations living in the same region, viz., Southern Arabia. One of these was descended from Cush, the son of Ham, and the other from Joktan, a descendant of Shem. These two peoples were often antagonistic in interests, despite the similarity of their names, but their divisions would be healed, and unitedly they would offer tribute to the Great King. It is an Arab proverb, "divided as the Sabæans," but Christ makes them one. "The Greek geographers usually couple Abyssinia with Yemen, in Arabia, and invariably represent the Abyssinians as an Arab or Sabæan race. Modern travellers, also, unanimously agree in recognising the Arab type among those Abyssinian populations which do not belong to the African stock." That the Sabæan nations were wealthy is clear from the Greek historian Agatharchides. "The Sabæans," says he, "have in their houses an incredible number of vases and utensils of all sorts, of gold and silver, beds and tripods of silver, and all the furniture of astonishing richness. Their buildings have porticoes with columns sheathed with gold, or surmounted by capitals of silver. On the friezes, ornaments, and the framework of the doors, they place plates of gold encrusted with precious stones. They spend immense sums in adorning these edifices, employing gold, silver, ivory, precious stones, and materials of the greatest value." They appear, also, to have acquired great wealth by trading, both with India and Africa, their peninsula lying between those two regions. Rich would be their gifts if Lenormant and Chevallier's description of their commerce be correct. "The principal importations from India were gold, tin, precious stones, ivory, sandal-wood, spices, pepper, cinnamon, and cotton. Besides these articles, the storehouses of southern Arabia received the products of the opposite coast of Africa, procured by the Sabæans in the active coasting trade they carried on with this not far distant land, where Mosyton (now Ras Abourgabeh) was the

principal port. These were, besides the spices that gave name to that coast, ebony, ostrich feathers, and more gold and ivory. With the addition of the products of the soil of southern Arabia itself, incense, myrrh, laudanum, precious stones, such as onyx and agates, lastly, aloes from the island of Socotra, and pearls from the fisheries in the Gulf of Ormus, we shall have the list of the articles comprised in the trade of this country with Egypt, and with those Asiatic countries bordering on the Mediterranean; and, at the same time, by considering this list, we may form an idea of how great must have been the importance and activity of such a traffic."

Poor as God's people usually are, the era will surely arrive when the richest of the rich will count it all joy to lay their treasures at Jesus' feet.—C. H. S.

Verse 12.—"*He shall deliver the needy when he crieth.*" There needeth no mediator between him and his subjects: *he heareth the needy when they cry.* The man that hath nothing within him or without him to commend him to Christ, to assist, help, relieve, or comfort him in heaven or earth, is not despised by Christ, but delivered from that which he feareth.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 13.—"*He shall spare;*" more correctly, *compassionate* or *comfort the poor and needy; and shall save the souls*, or *preserve the lives of the needy.*—*William Henry Alexander, in "The Book of Praises: being the Book of Psalms . . . . with Notes Original and Selected."* 1867.

Verse 13.—"*And shall save the souls of the needy.*" Scipio used to say, that he would rather save a single citizen than slay a thousand enemies. Of this mind ought all princes to be towards their subjects; but this affection and love rose to the highest excellence and power in the breast of Christ. So ardent is his love for his own, that he suffers not one of them to perish, but leads them to full salvation, and, opposing himself to both devils and tyrants who seek to destroy their souls, he constrains their fury and confounds their rage.—*Mollerus.*

Verse 14.—"*And precious shall their blood be in his sight.*" The Angolani so despised their slaves that they would sometimes give as many as twenty-two for one hunting dog. . . . But Christ prefers the soul of one of his servants to the whole world, since he died that it might be made more capable of entering into eternal felicity. For breaking one goblet the Roman cast his slave into the pond to be devoured by the murænæ. But the Son of God came down from heaven to earth to deliver mankind, his vile, ungrateful, faithless servants, from the pangs of the serpent, like the golden fleece, and save them as Jonah from the whale. Is not their blood precious in his sight?—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 15.—"*And he shall live;*" Hebrew, "So shall he live;" *i. e.*, the poor man.—*Charles Carter.*

Verse 15.—"*And he shall live.*" There is a clear reference to the coronation of kings in the loud acclamations, *Long live the King!* and the bestowal of the customary gifts and presents, as is plain from 2 Sam. xvi. 16; 1 Kings i. 39; 1 Sam. x. 27; 2 Chron. xvii. 5.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 15.—"*He shall live.*" Alexander the Great acknowledged at death that he was a frail and feeble man. "Lo! I," said he, "am dying, whom you falsely called a god." But Christ proved that he was God when, by his own death, he overcame, and, as I may say, slew death.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 15.—"*He shall live.*" It is a great consolation to soldiers imperilled amid many forms of death, that their king *shall live.* Whence one of the chief of these warriors, consoling himself, said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that at the last day I shall rise from the earth." Great is the consolation of the dying, that he for whom, or in whom, they die, *shall live* for evermore. With whom, if we die, we shall also live again, and share his riches

equally with himself; for rich indeed is our Solomon, in whom are hidden all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God.—*Gerhohus.*

Verse 15.—"*Prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.*" It might have been rendered, "Prayer also shall be made *through* him continually, and daily shall he be blessed." The word is rendered "blessed," when speaking of an act of worship towards God; and the word translated "for" is sometimes used for "through," as Joshua ii. 15,—"Through the window." If we hold the translation "for him," then it must be understood of the saints praying for the Father's accomplishment of his promises, made to the Son in the covenant of redemption, that his kingdom may come, his name be glorified, and that he may see his seed, and that the full reward may be given him for his sufferings, and so that he may receive the joy that was set before him.—*Jonathan Edwards.*

Verse 15.—"*Prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.*" In all conquered countries, *two* things marked the subjection of the people: 1. Their money was stamped with the name of the conqueror. 2. They were obliged to pray for him in their acts of public worship.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 16.—"*An handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains.*" Not only would the soil be likely to lack depth of earth, but the seed itself would be apt to be blown away by the winds of heaven, or washed down by the teeming rain to the base beneath.—*Peter Grant.* 1867.

Verse 16.—"*An handful of corn,*" etc. Upon mature consideration, I am persuaded that the proper sense of the word פְּסַת, or, פִּסָּה, is "a patch" or "piece;" and that it is used here just as we use the same words in English, in such expressions as these,—"a patch of wheat, a patch of barley, a piece of corn."—*Samuel Horsley.*

Verse 16.—"*An handful of corn.*" Doubtless it has been familiar to you to see corn merchants carrying small bags with them, containing just a handful of corn, which they exhibit as specimens of the store which they have for sale. Now, let me beg of every one of you to carry a small bag with this precious corn of the gospel. When you write a letter, drop in a word for Christ; it may be a seed that will take root. . . . . Speak a word for Christ wherever you go; it may be seed productive of a great deal of fruit. Drop a tract on the counter, or in a house; it may be a seed productive of a plenteous harvest. The most difficult place, the steepest mountain, the spot where there is the least hope of producing fruit, is to be the first place of attack; and the more labour there is required, the more is to be given, in the distribution of the seeds.—*James Sherman.*

Verse 16.—"*Shall shake like Lebanon.*" With a plentiful ear, shall yield so large and strong a stalk that, with the motion of the wind, it shall shake cedar-like.—*Joseph Hall.*

Verse 16.—"*Shall shake as Lebanon.*" That is to say, shall wave backwards and forwards with the wind, like the tall cedars of Lebanon. This implies that the corn will be lofty and luxuriant.—*French and Skinner.*

Verse 16.—Neither *wave* nor *shake* conveys the full force of the Hebrew verb רָעַשׁ which suggests the additional idea of a rushing noise, like that of the wind among the cedars of Lebanon. This comparison is certainly more natural and obvious than that which some interpreters assume with the grain-crops or harvest-fields of Lebanon itself. This would be merely likening one harvest to another, nor is any such allusion ever made elsewhere to the mountain, though its circumjacent plains and valleys were productive.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 16.—"*Like Lebanon.*" By dint of skill and labour, they have compelled a rocky soil to become fertile. Sometimes, to avail themselves of the waters, they have made a channel for them, by means of a thousand windings, on the declivities, or have arrested them in the valleys by embankments. At

other times, they have propped up the earth, that was ready to roll down, by means of terraces and walls. Almost all the mountains being thus husbanded, present the appearance of a staircase, or of an amphitheatre, each tier of which is a row of vines or mulberry-trees. I have counted, upon one declivity, as many as a hundred, or a hundred and twenty, tiers from the bottom of the valley to the top of the hill. I forgot, for the moment, that I was in Turkey —*Volney.*

Verse 16.—"*Like Lebanon.*" To understand the images taken from Mount Lebanon, it is necessary to remark that four enclosures of mountains are described, rising one upon another. The first and lowest of these is described as rich in grain and fruits. The second is barren, being covered only with thorns, rocks, and flints. The third, though higher still, is blessed with a perpetual spring; the trees are always green. There are innumerable orchards laden with fruit, and it forms, altogether, a terrestrial paradise,

> "Where fruits and blossoms blush,
> In social sweetness, on the self-same bough."

The fourth, or highest ridge of all, is the region of perpetual snow Now, the imagery in the 72nd Psalm is evidently taken from the first of these ridges of Lebanon, where (most probably following the ancient mode of cultivating) the monks of Lebanon, for they were the chief cultivators of the terraced soil, industriously husband every particle of productive earth. In the expressive words of Burckhardt, "*Every inch of ground* is cultivated," so that no image could have been more singularly expressive of the universal cultivation under Messiah's reign, than to say that "*His fruit shall shake like Lebanon;*" or, understanding the psalmist to speak figuratively, what moral landscape could be painted more richly than he does, when he intimates that those barren mountains of our world, which at present yield no fruit unto God, shall be cultivated in that day so industriously and so fully, that the fruit shall wave like the terraced corn-fields, or shake like the hanging mulberry-trees on the terraced heights of Lebanon.—*Robert Murray McCheyne.* 1813—1843.

Verse 16.—"*Shall flourish like grass.*" The peculiar characters of the grass, which adapt it especially for the service of man, are its apparent *humility* and *cheerfulness.* Its humility, in that it seems created only for lowest service,—appointed to be trodden on and fed upon. Its cheerfulness, in that it seems to exult under all kinds of violence and suffering. You roll it, and it is stronger next day; you mow it, and it multiplies its shoots, as if it were grateful; you tread upon it, and it only sends up richer perfume. Spring comes, and it rejoices with all the earth,—glowing with variegated flame of flowers,—waving in soft depth of fruitful strength. Winter comes, and, though it will not mock its fellow plants by growing then, it will not pine and mourn, and turn colourless and leafless as they. It is always green; and is only the brighter and gayer for the hoar-frost.—*John Ruskin.*

Verse 17.—"*His name shall be continued.*" *Yinnon:* The Kethiv, *yanin,* would be; "shall produce fresh progeny," or "send forth new shoots."

M. Renan was far from intending to supply a commentary on this verse, when he said of the Lord Jesus, "Son culte *se rajeunira sans cesse.*" Yet it would not be easy to find a more forcible illustration of the meaning of *yanin.* —*William Kay.*

Verse 17 (*second clause*).—The version and sense which Gussetius gives seems best of all: *His name shall generate,* or *beget children before the sun;* that is, his name preached, as the gospel, which is his name (Acts ix. 15), shall be the means of begetting many sons and daughters openly and publicly, in the face of the sun, and wherever that is.—*John Gill.*

Verse 17.—"*All nations shall call him blessed.*" It is sometimes inadvertently said that the Old Testament is narrow and exclusive, while the New Testament is broad and catholic in its spirit. This is a

mistake. The Old and New Testaments are of one mind on this matter. Many are called, and few chosen. This is the common doctrine of the New as well as of the Old. They are both equally catholic in proclaiming the gospel to all. The covenant with Adam and with Noah is still valid, and sure to all who return to God; and the call of Abram is expressly said to be a means of extending blessing to all the families of man. The New Testament does not aim at anything more than this: it merely hails the approaching accomplishment of the same gracious end.—*James G. Murphy, in "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Genesis."* 1863.

Verse 19.—"*Amen, and Amen.*" Rabbi Jehudah the Holy, said, "He that said *Amen* in this world is worthy to say it in the world to come. David, therefore, utters *Amen* twice in this Psalm, to show that one 'Amen' belongs to this world, the other to that which is to come. He who saith 'Amen' devoutly, is greater than he who uttereth the prayers, for the prayers are but the letter, and the Amen is the seal. The scribe writeth the letters, the prince alone seals them."—*Neale and Littledale.*

Verse 19.—"*Amen, and Amen.*" What is "*Amen*" in Matt. xvi. 28 is ἀληθῶς or "verily" in Luke ix. 27. Our Saviour hath this phrase peculiar to himself, "Amen, Amen," to give confirmation to the doctrine, and to raise our attention and faith; or to show that not only truth is spoken, but by him who is truth itself. . . . There is no need for a rubric by the men of the Great Synagogue, or a canon, to command a man to blush, when it is only the natural passion that will command it; so, when the heart is warm in prayer with serious and earnest affections, a double Amen doth as naturally flow from us as milk from a mother's breast to her suckling. And *Amen* comes from אָמַן, *aman*, which signifies "to nurse;" as if it were, if not the mother, yet the faithful nurse, of lively devotion. Assent to repetitions is essential unto prayer, and it is not signified publicly but by one Amen.—*Thomas Woodcock* (—1695) *in "Morning Exercises."*

Verse 19.—"*Amen*" is a short word, but marvellously pregnant, full of sense, full of spirit. It is a word that seals all the truths of God, that seals every particular promise of God. And it is never likely to arise in the soul, unless there be first an almighty power from heaven, to seize on the powers of the soul, to subdue them, and make it say, "Amen." There is such an inward rising of the heart, and an innate rebellion against the blessed truth of God, that unless God, by his strong arm, bring the heart down, it never will nor can say, "Amen."—*Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 20.—"*The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.*" This announcement carries with it an intimation that other Psalms besides are to follow. It would have been superfluous, if the Psalms had not been to follow which bear on their front the name of David. To this, indeed, it must point, bearing the character of an enigma, that these additional Psalms stood in other relations than those given in the first two books. We shall attain perfect clearness and certainty by perceiving that all the Psalms of David in the last two books are inserted as component parts into the later cycles. The subscription at the end of the second book must have been designed to separate the free from the bound, the scattered and serial Psalms of David from each other. Analogous in some measure is the subscription, *at an end are the speeches of Job*, in Job xxxi. 40, which is not contradicted by the fact that Job appears again speaking in chapters xl. and xlii.; it should rather be regarded as serving to give us a right understanding of that formal conclusion.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 20.—At the conclusion of this Psalm, the Hebrew copies have, *Here end the orisons of David, the son of Jesse.* But, as several other Psalms of David follow, we must understand the note to mean either, "Here ends this book of the orisons of David," or, "Here ends the collection of hymns made

by David himself;" additions being afterwards made to it, containing other hymns of David, by Asaph and others, and, lastly, by Esdras.— *Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 20.—"*The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.*" So long as the fivefold division of the Psalter was neglected, this note gave nothing but perplexity to the commentators. Augustine, and his master, Ambrose of Milan, finding it standing in their Psalters, between the seventy-second and seventy-third Psalms, took it for part of the title of the latter, and tortured their ingenuity in divining its import. Calvin saw that the note is retrospective, but, not having observed its position at the end of a book, he thought it pertained exclusively to the Psalm immediately preceding, and took it to mean that that Psalm embalms the last prayers of the aged king. But he was at a loss to reconcile this with the two obvious facts, that the *title* of the Psalm ascribes it to Solomon, and that quite a different Psalm is elsewhere preserved as "the last words of David" (2 Sam. xxiii. 1). And this perplexity of the great Reformer is shared by the older commentators generally. We get rid of it at once, by simply remarking the position of the note in question. It is set down after a doxology which marks the end of the Second Book. It has no special reference, therefore, to the seventy-second Psalm. It either refers to the Second Book, or, more probably, to both the First and Second.— *William Binnie.*

Verse 20.—"*The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.*" [Compared with] Ps. 86, title, "*A prayer of David.*" How can the prayers of David be said to be ended, when more begin? Answer: The end David had in making the Psalms, prayers, and praises, is one thing; but to make a final end of praying is another. Many several opinions have been given to reconcile this. Some that here end the prayers he made for Solomon. Some that here end the prayers he made in the days of his affliction. Some that here end the praises that he made, not the prayers, turning the word *tepillahs* into *tehillahs* Some that here end David's, the rest that follow are Asaph's. Some that this Psalm was the last, the rest *posthumes*, found after his death. Some think it is spoken as the phrase is in Job, ch. 31, last verse: "The words of Job are ended;" and yet he had some words after this, but not so many. But the soundest resolution is this:—Here ends the prayers of David the son of Jesse; that is, here they are perfected. If any ask hereafter what or where lies the end that all these Psalms were made for? tell them here it lies in this Psalm, and, therefore, placed in the midst of all; as the centre in midst of a circle, all the lines meet here, and all the Psalms determine here; for it is only a prophetical treatise of the kingdom of Christ drawn out to the life, and it is dedicated to Solomon, because here is wisdom; other men had other ends, it may be, but the son of Jesse had no other end in the world but to set out Christ's kingdom in making of his Psalms.— *William Streat, in "The Dividing of the Hoof."* 1654.

Verse 20.—"*The son of Jesse.*" It is the note of true humility and sincere love to God to abase ourselves, and acknowledge our low condition, wherein God did find us when he did let forth his love to us, that thereby we may commend the riches of God's goodness and grace unto us, appeareth here in David.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 20.—"*Are ended.*" The sense is, that David, the son of Jesse, had nothing to pray for, or to wish, beyond the great things described in this Psalm. Nothing can be more animated than this conclusion. Having described the blessings of Messiah's reign, he closes the whole with this magnificent doxology:—

Blessed be Jehovah God,
God of Israel, alone performing wonders;
And blessed be his name of glory,
And let his glory fill the whole of the earth.
Amen, and Amen.
Finished are the prayers of David, the son of Jesse.

Samuel Horsley.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Whole Psalm.—I. He shall. II. They shall. Ring the changes on these, as the Psalm does.

Verse 1.—The prayer of the ancient church now fulfilled. I. Our Lord's titles. 1. King, by divine nature. 2. King's Son, in both natures. Thus we see his power innate and derived. II. Our Lord's authority: "Judgments." 1. To rule his people. 2. To rule the world for his people's benefit. 3. To judge mankind. 4. To judge devils. III. Our Lord's character. He is righteous in rewarding and punishing, righteous towards God and man. IV. Our loyal prayer. This asks for his rule over ourselves and the universe.

Verse 2.—Christ's rule in his church. I. The subjects. 1. Thy people, the elect, called, etc. 2. Thy poor, through conviction and consciousness of sin. II. The ruler. He, only, truly, constantly, etc. III. The rule—righteous, impartial, gentle, prudent, etc. Lesson. Desire this rule.

Verse 3.—Mountains of divine decree, of immutable truth, of almighty power, of eternal grace, etc. These mountains of God are securities of peace.

Verse 4.—The poor man's King, or the benefits derived by the poor from the reign of Jesus.

Verse 5.—The perpetuity of the gospel, reasons for it, things which threaten it, and lessons derived from it.

Verse 6.—The field, the shower, the result. This verse is easily enough handled in a variety of ways.

Verse 7.—I. The righteous flourish more at one season than another. II They flourish most when Jesus is with them: "in his days," etc. III. The fruit of their growth is proportionally abundant: "and abundance," etc.—*G. Rogers.*

Verse 7.—"*Abundance of peace.*" Abundant overtures of peace, abundant redemption making peace, abundant pardon conferring peace, abundant influences of the Spirit sealing peace, abundant promises guaranteeing peace, abundant love spreading peace, etc.

Verse 8.—The universal spread of the gospel. Other theories as to the future overturned, and their evil influence exposed; while the benefit and certainty of this truth is vindicated.

Verse 9 (*last clause*).—The ignoble end of Christ's enemies.

Verse 10.—Christian finance; voluntary but abundant are the gifts presented to Jesus.

Verse 12.—Christ's peculiar care of the poor.

Verse 12.—I. Pitiable characters. II. Abject condition: "cry;" "no helper." III. Natural resort: "crieth." IV. Glorious interposition.

Verse 14.—The martyr's hope in life and comfort in death.—*G. Rogers.*

Verse 14 (*last clause*).—The martyr's blood. I. Seen of God when shed. II. Remembered by him. III. Honoured by being a benefit to the church. IV. Rewarded especially in heaven.

Verse 15.—"*Prayer shall be made for him.*" We are to pray for Jesus Christ. Owing to the interest he has in certain objects, what is done for them is done for himself; and so he esteems it. We, therefore, pray for him when we pray for his ministers, his ordinances, his gospel, his church—in a word, his *cause.* But what should we pray for on his behalf? I. The degree of its resources; that there be always a sufficiency of suitable and able instruments to carry on the work. II. The freedom of its administration; that whatever opposes or hinders its progress may be removed. III. The diffusion of its principles; that they may become general and universal. IV. The increase of its glory, as well as its extent.—*W. Jay.*

Verse 15.—Prayer for Jesus, a suggestive topic. Daily praise, a Christian duty.

Verse 15.—A living Saviour, a giving people; the connection between the

two. Or, Christ in the church fills the exchequer, fosters the prayer-meeting, and sanctifies the service of song.

Verse 16.—I. A happy description of the gospel; it is "a handful of corn." II The places where it is sown. III. The blessed effects which this gospel, when thus sown, will produce in the world.—*J. Sherman.*

Verse 16.—I. Commencement. II. Publicity. III. Growth. IV. Result.

Verse 16.—I. What? "Corn." II. How much? "A handful." III. Where? "In the earth upon the top of the mountains." IV. Will it grow? "The fruit," etc. V. What then? "They of the city," etc.

Verse 17.—I. Christ glorified in the Church: "men shall be blessed," etc. II. Glorified in the world; "all nations," etc. III. Glorified in worlds to come: "endure," "be continued," etc. IV. Glorified for ever.—*G. Rogers.*

Verses 17, 18, 19.—The Four Blesseds, their meaning and order.

Verse 18.—The clauses may be treated under the following heads. I. The object of praise. II. The subject of praise. III. The duration of praise. IV. The extent of the praise; and, V. The echo of the praise. "Amen, and Amen."—*G. Rogers.*

Verse 18.—"*Wondrous things.*" The unparalleled works of the Lord in providence and grace.

Verse 20.—I. Prayer should be frequent: "The prayers." II. Should be individual: "of David." III. Should be early commenced: "the son of Jesse." IV. Should be continued till they are no more needed.

WORK UPON THE SEVENTY-SECOND PSALM.

In CHANDLER'S *Life of David*, Vol. II., pp. 440—44, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.

HERE ENDETH THE SECOND BOOK OF THE PSALMS.

PSALM LXXIII.

TITLE.—**A Psalm of Asaph.** *This is the second Psalm ascribed to Asaph, and the first of eleven consecutive Psalms bearing the name of this eminent singer. Some writers are not sure that Asaph wrote them, but incline to the belief that David was the author, and Asaph the person to whom they were dedicated, that he might sing them when in his turn he became the chief musician. But though our own heart turns in the same direction, facts must be heard; and we find in* 2 Chron. xxix. 30, *that Hezekiah commanded the Levites to sing "the words of David and of Asaph the seer;" and, moreover, in* Nehemiah xii. 46, *David and Asaph are mentioned together, as distinct from "the chief of the singers," and, as it would seem, as joint authors of psalmody. We may, therefore, admit Asaph to be the author of some, if not all, of the twelve Psalms ascribed to him. Often a great star which seems to be but one to the eyes of ordinary observers, turns out upon closer inspection to be of a binary character; so here the Psalms of David are those of Asaph, too. The great sun of David has a satellite in the moon of Asaph. By reading our notes on Psalm Fifty, in Vol. II., the reader will glean a little more concerning this man of God.*

SUBJECT.—*Curiously enough this Seventy-third Psalm corresponds in subject with the Thirty-seventh; it will help the memory of the young to notice the reversed figures. The theme is that ancient stumbling-block of good men, which Job's friends could not get over; viz.—the present prosperity of wicked men and the sorrows of the godly. Heathen philosophers have puzzled themselves about this, while to believers it has too often been a temptation.*

DIVISIONS.—*In verse* 1 *the psalmist declares his confidence in God, and, as it were, plants his foot on a rock while he recounts his inward conflict. From* 2 *to* 14 *he states his temptation; then, from* 15 *to* 17 *he is embarrassed as to how to act, but ultimately finds deliverance from his dilemma. He describes with awe the fate of the ungodly in verses* 18—20, *condemns his own folly and adores the grace of God,* 21—24, *and concludes by renewing his allegiance to his God, whom he takes afresh to be his portion and delight.*

EXPOSITION.

TRULY God *is* good to Israel, *even* to such as are of a clean heart.

1. "*Truly*," or, more correctly, *only*, "*God is good to Israel.*" He is only good, nothing else but good to his own covenanted ones. He cannot act unjustly or unkindly to them; his goodness to them is beyond dispute, and without mixture. "*Even to such as are of a clean heart.*" These are the true Israel, not the ceremonially clean but the really so; those who are clean in the inward parts, pure in the vital mainspring of action. To such he is, and must be, goodness itself. The writer does not doubt this, but lays it down as his firm conviction. It is well to make sure of what we do know, for this will be good anchor-hold for us when we are molested by those mysterious storms which arise from things which we do not understand. Whatever may or may not be the truth about mysterious and inscrutable things, there are certainties somewhere; experience has placed some tangible facts within our grasp; let us, then, cling to these, and they will prevent our being carried away by those hurricanes of infidelity which still come from the wilderness, and, like whirlwinds, smite the four corners of our house and threaten to overthrow it. O my God, however perplexed I may be, let me never think ill of thee. If I cannot understand thee, let me never cease to believe in thee. It must be so, it cannot be otherwise, thou art good to those whom thou hast made good; and where thou hast renewed the heart thou wilt not leave it to its enemies.

2 But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.

3 For I was envious at the foolish, *when* I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

4 For *there are* no bands in their death: but their strength *is* firm.

5 They *are* not in trouble *as other* men; neither are they plagued like *other* men.

6 Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them *as* a garment.

7 Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.

8 They are corrupt, and speak wickedly *concerning* oppression: they speak loftily.

9 They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.

10 Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full *cup* are wrung out to them.

11 And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?

12 Behold, these *are* the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase *in* riches.

13 Verily I have cleansed my heart *in* vain, and washed my hands in innocency.

14 For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.

2. Here begins the narrative of a great soul-battle, a spiritual Marathon, a hard and well-fought field, in which the half-defeated became in the end wholly victorious. "*But as for me.*" He contrasts himself with his God who is ever good; he owns his personal want of good, and then also compares himself with the clean in heart, and goes on to confess his defilement. The Lord is good to his saints, "*but as for me,*" am I one of them? Can I expect to share his grace? Yes, I do share it; but I have acted an unworthy part, very unlike one who is truly pure in heart. "*My feet were almost gone.*" Errors of heart and head soon affect the conduct. There is an intimate connection between the heart and the feet. Asaph could barely stand, his uprightness was going, his knees were bowing like a falling wall. When men doubt the righteousness of God, their own integrity begins to waver. "*My steps had well nigh slipped.*" Asaph could make no progress in the good road, his feet ran away from under him like those of a man on a sheet of ice. He was weakened for all practical action, and in great danger of actual sin, and so of a disgraceful fall. How ought we to watch the inner man, since it has so forcible an effect upon the outward character. The confession in this case is, as it should be, very plain and explicit.

3. "*For I was envious at the foolish.*" "The foolish" is the generic title of all the wicked: they are beyond all others fools, and he must be a fool who envies fools. Some read it, "the proud;" and, indeed, these, by their ostentation, invite envy, and many a mind which is out of gear spiritually, becomes infected with that wasting disease. It is a pitiful thing that an heir of heaven should have to confess "I was envious," but worse still that he should have to put it, "I was envious at the foolish." Yet this acknowledgment is, we fear,

due from most of us. "*When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*" His eye was fixed too much on one thing; he saw their present, and forgot their future, saw their outward display, and overlooked their soul's discomfort. Who envies the bullock his fat when he recollects the shambles? Yet some poor afflicted saint has been sorely tempted to grudge the ungodly sinner his temporary plenty. All things considered, Dives had more cause to envy Lazarus than Lazarus to be envious of Dives.

4. "*For there are no bands in their death.*" This is mentioned as the chief wonder, for we usually expect that in the solemn article of death, a difference will appear, and the wicked will become evidently in trouble. The notion is still prevalent that a quiet death means a happy hereafter. The psalmist had observed that the very reverse is true. Careless persons become case-hardened, and continue presumptuously secure, even to the last. Some are startled at the approach of judgment, but many more have received a strong delusion to believe a lie. What with the surgeon's drugs and their own infidelity, or false peace, they glide into eternity without a struggle. We have seen godly men bound with doubts, and fettered with anxieties, which have arisen from their holy jealousy; but the godless know nothing of such bands: they care neither for God nor devil. "*Their strength is firm.*" What care they for death? Frequently they are brazen and insolent, and can vent defiant blasphemies even on their last couch. This may occasion sorrow and surprise among saints, but certainly should not suggest envy, for, in this case, the most terrible inward conflict is infinitely to be preferred to the profoundest calm which insolent presumption can create. Let the righteous die as they may, let my last end be like theirs.

5. "*They are not in trouble as other men.*" The prosperous wicked escape the killing toils which afflict the mass of mankind; their bread comes to them without care, their wine without stint. They have no need to enquire, "Whence shall we get bread for our children, or raiment for our little ones?" Ordinary domestic and personal troubles do not appear to molest them. "*Neither are they plagued like other men.*" Fierce trials do not arise to assail them: they smart not under the divine rod. While many saints are both poor and afflicted, the prosperous sinner is neither. He is worse than other men, and yet he is better off; he ploughs least, and yet has the most fodder. He deserves the hottest hell, and yet has the warmest nest. All this is clear to the eye of faith, which unriddles the riddle; but to the bleared eye of sense it seems an enigma indeed. They are to have nothing hereafter, let them have what they can here; they, after all, only possess what is of secondary value, and their possessing it is meant to teach us to set little store by transient things. If earthly good were of much value, the Lord would not give so large a measure of it to those who have least of his love.

6. "*Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain.*" They are as great in their own esteem as if they were aldermen of the New Jerusalem; they want no other ornament than their own pomposity. No jeweller could sufficiently adorn them; they wear their own pride as a better ornament than a gold chain. "*Violence covereth them as a garment.*" In their boastful arrogance they array themselves; they wear the livery of the devil, and are fond of it. As soon as you see them, you perceive that room must be made for them, for, regardless of the feelings and rights of others, they intend to have their way, and achieve their own ends. They brag and bully, bluster and browbeat, as if they had taken out a license to ride roughshod over all mankind.

7. "*Their eyes stand out with fatness.*" In cases of obesity the eyes usually appear to be enclosed in fat, but sometimes they protrude; in either case the countenance is changed, loses its human form, and is assimilated to that of fatted swine. The face is here the index of the man: the man has more than suffices him; he is glutted and surfeited with wealth, and yet is one of the wicked whom God abhorreth. "*They have more than heart could wish.*" Their wishes are gratified, and more; their very greediness is exceeded; they call

for water, and the world gives them milk; they ask for hundreds, and thousands are lavished at their feet. The heart is beyond measure gluttonous, and yet in the case of certain ungodly millionaires, who have rivalled Sardanapalus both in lust and luxury, it has seemed as if their wishes were exceeded, and their meat surpassed their appetite.

8. "*They are corrupt.*" They rot above ground; their heart and life are depraved. "*And speak wickedly concerning oppression.*" The reek of the sepulchre rises through their mouths; the nature of the soul is revealed in the speech. They choose oppression as their subject, and they not only defend it, but advocate it, glory in it, and would fain make it the general rule among all nations. "Who are the poor? What are they made for? What, indeed, but to toil and slave that men of education and good family may enjoy themselves? Out on the knaves for prating about their rights! A set of wily demagogues are stirring them up, because they get a living by agitation. Work them like horses, and feed them like dogs; and if they dare complain, send them to the prison or let them die in the workhouse." There is still too much of this wicked talk abroad, and, although the working classes have their faults, and many of them very grave and serious ones too, yet there is a race of men who habitually speak of them as if they were an inferior order of animals. God forgive the wretches who thus talk. "*They speak loftily.*" Their high heads, like tall chimneys, vomit black smoke. Big talk streams from them, their language is colossal, their magniloquence ridiculous. They are Sir Oracle in every case, they speak as from the judge's bench, and expect all the world to stand in awe of them.

9. "*They set their mouth against the heavens.*" Against God himself they aim their blasphemies. One would think, to hear them, that they were demi-gods themselves, and held their heads above the clouds, for they speak down upon other men as from a sublime elevation peculiar to themselves. Yet they might let God alone, for their pride will make them enemies enough without their defying him. "*And their tongue walketh through the earth.*" Leisurely and habitually they traverse the whole world to find victims for their slander and abuse. Their tongue prowls in every corner far and near, and spares none. They affect to be universal censors, and are in truth perpetual vagrants. Like the serpent, they go nowhere without leaving their slime behind them; if there were another Eden to be found, its innocence and beauty would not preserve it from their filthy trail. They themselves are, beyond measure, worthy of all honour, and all the rest of mankind, except a few of their parasites, are knaves, fools, hypocrites, or worse. When these men's tongues are out for a walk, they are unhappy who meet them, for they push all travellers into the kennel: it is impossible altogether to avoid them, for in both hemispheres they take their perambulations, both on land and sea they make their voyages. The city is not free from them, and the village swarms with them. They waylay men in the king's highway, but they are able to hunt across country, too. Their whip has a long lash, and reaches both high and low.

10. "*Therefore his people return hither.*" God's people are driven to fly to his throne for shelter; the doggish tongues fetch home the sheep to the Shepherd. The saints come again, and again, to their Lord, laden with complaints on account of the persecutions which they endure from these proud and graceless men. "*And waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.*" Though beloved of God, they have to drain the bitter cup; their sorrows are as full as the wicked man's prosperity. It grieves them greatly to see the enemies of God so high, and themselves so low, yet the Lord does not alter his dispensations, but continues still to chasten his children, and indulge his foes. The medicine cup is not for rebels, but for those whom Jehovah Rophi loves.

11. "*And they say, How doth God know?*" Thus dare the ungodly speak. They flatter themselves that their oppressions and persecutions are unobserved of heaven. If there be a God, is he not too much occupied with other matters to know what is going on upon this world? So they console themselves if judgments be threatened. Boasting of their own knowledge, they yet dare

to ask, "*Is there knowledge in the most High?*" Well were they called foolish. A God, and not know! This is a solecism in language, a madness of thought. Such, however, is the acted insanity of the graceless theists of this age; theists in name, because avowed infidelity is disreputable, but atheists in practice beyond all question.

I could not bring my mind to accept the rendering of many expositors by which this verse is referred to tried and perplexed saints. I am unable to conceive that such language could flow from their lips, even under the most depressing perplexities.

12. "*Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world.*" Look! See! Consider! Here is the standing enigma! The crux of Providence! The stumbling-block of faith! Here are the unjust rewarded and indulged, and that not for a day or an hour, but in perpetuity. From their youth up these men, who deserve perdition, revel in prosperity. They deserve to be hung in chains, and chains are hung about their necks; they are worthy to be chased from the world, and yet the world becomes all their own. Poor purblind sense cries, Behold this! Wonder, and be amazed, and make this square with providential justice, if you can. "*They increase in riches;*" or, strength. Both wealth and health are their dowry. No bad debts and bankruptcies weigh them down, but robbery and usury pile up their substance. Money runs to money, gold pieces fly in flocks; the rich grow richer, the proud grow prouder. Lord, how is this? Thy poor servants, who become yet poorer, and groan under their burdens, are made to wonder at thy mysterious ways.

13. "*Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain.*" Poor Asaph! he questions the value of holiness when its wages are paid in the coin of affliction. With no effect has he been sincere; no advantage has come to him through his purity, for the filthy-hearted are exalted and fed on the fat of the land. Thus foolishly will the wisest of men argue, when faith is napping. Asaph was a seer, but he could not see when reason left him in the dark; even seers must have the sunlight of revealed truth to see by, or they grope like the blind. In the presence of temporal circumstances, the pure in heart may seem to have cleansed themselves altogether in vain, but we must not judge after the sight of the eyes. "*And washed my hands in innocency.*" Asaph had been as careful of his hands as of his heart; he had guarded his outer as well as his inner life, and it was a bitter thought that all this was useless, and left him in even a worse condition than foul-handed, black-hearted worldlings. Surely the horrible character of the conclusion must have helped to render it untenable; it could not be so while God was God. It smelt too strong of a lie to be tolerated long in the good man's soul; hence, in a verse or two, we see his mind turning in another direction.

14. "*For all the day long have I been plagued.*" He was smitten from the moment he woke to the time he went to bed. His griefs were not only continued, but renewed with every opening day, "*And chastened every morning.*" This was a vivid contrast to the lot of the ungodly. There were crowns for the reprobates and crosses for the elect. Strange that the saints should sigh and the sinners sing. Rest was given to the disturbers, and yet peace was denied to the peace-makers. The downcast seer was in a muse and a maze. The affairs of mankind appeared to him to be in a fearful tangle; how could it be permitted by a just ruler that things should be so turned upside down, and the whole course of justice dislocated.

Here is the case stated in the plainest manner, and many a Christian will herein recognise his own experience. Such knots have we also sought to untie, and have sadly worn our fingers and broken our teeth. Dear-bought has our wisdom been, but we have bought it; and, henceforth, we cease to fret because of evil-doers, for the Lord hath showed us what their end will be.

15 If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend *against* the generation of thy children.

16 When I thought to know this, it *was* too painful for me·
17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *then* understood I their end.

15. "*If I say, I will speak thus.*" It is not always wise to speak one's thoughts; if they remain within, they will only injure ourselves; but, once uttered, their mischief may be great. From such a man as the psalmist, the utterance which his discontent suggested would have been a heavy blow and deep discouragement to the whole brotherhood. He dared not, therefore, come to such a resolution, but paused, and would not decide to declare his feelings. It was well, for in his case second thoughts were by far the best. "*I should offend against the generation of thy children.*" I should scandalise them, grieve them, and perhaps cause them to offend also. We ought to look at the consequences of our speech to all others, and especially to the church of God. Woe unto the man by whom offence cometh! Rash, undigested, illconsidered speech, is responsible for much of the heart-burning and trouble in the churches. Would to God that, like Asaph, men would bridle their tongues. Where we have any suspicion of being wrong, it is better to be silent; it can do no harm to be quiet, and it may do serious damage to spread abroad our hastily formed opinions. To grieve the children of God by appearing to act perfidiously and betray the truth, is a sin so heinous, that if the consciences of heresy-mongers were not seared as with a hot iron, they would not be so glib as they are to publish abroad their novelties. Expressions which convey the impression that the Lord acts unjustly or unkindly, especially if they fall from the lips of men of known character and experience, are as dangerous as firebrands among stubble; they are used for blasphemous purposes by the ill-disposed; and the timid and trembling are sure to be cast down thereby, and to find reason for yet deeper distress of soul.

16. "*When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me.*" The thought of scandalising the family of God he could not bear, and yet his inward thoughts seethed and fermented, and caused an intolerable anguish within. To speak might have relieved one sorrow, but, as it would have created another, he forbore so dangerous a remedy; yet this did not remove the first pangs, which grew even worse and worse, and threatened utterly to overwhelm him. A smothered grief is hard to endure. The triumph of conscience which compels us to keep the wolf hidden beneath our own garments, does not forbid its gnawing at our vitals. Suppressed fire in the bones rages more fiercely than if it could gain a vent at the mouth. Those who know Asaph's dilemma will pity him as none others can.

17. "*Until I went into the sanctuary of God.*" His mind entered the eternity where God dwells as in a holy place, he left the things of sense for the things invisible, his heart gazed within the veil, he stood where the thrice holy God stands. Thus he shifted his point of view, and apparent disorder resolved itself into harmony. The motions of the planets appear most discordant from this world which is itself a planet; they appear as "progressive, retrograde, and standing still;" but could we fix our observatory in the sun, which is the centre of the system, we should perceive all the planets moving in perfect circle around the head of the great solar family. "*Then understood I their end.*" He had seen too little to be able to judge; a wider view changed his judgment; he saw with his mind's enlightened eye the future of the wicked, and his soul was in debate no longer as to the happiness of their condition. No envy gnaws now at his heart, but a holy horror both of their impending doom, and of their present guilt, fills his soul. He recoils from being dealt with in the same manner as the proud sinners, whom just now he regarded with admiration.

18 Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.

19 How are they *brought* into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.

20 As a dream when *one* awaketh; *so,* O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.

18. The psalmist's sorrow had culminated, not in the fact that the ungodly prospered, but that God had arranged it so: had it happened by mere chance, he would have wondered, but could not have complained; but how the arranger of all things could so dispense his temporal favours, was the vexatious question. Here, to meet the case, he sees that the divine hand purposely placed these men in prosperous and eminent circumstances, not with the intent to bless them but the very reverse. "*Surely thou didst set them in slippery places.*" Their position was dangerous, and, therefore, God did not set his friends there but his foes alone. He chose, in infinite love, a rougher but safer standing for his own beloved. "*Thou castedst them down into destruction.*" The same hand which led them up to their Tarpeian rock, hurled them down from it. They were but elevated by judicial arrangement for the fuller execution of their doom. Eternal punishment will be all the more terrible in contrast with the former prosperity of those who are ripening for it. Taken as a whole, the case of the ungodly is horrible throughout; and their worldly joy instead of diminishing the horror, actually renders the effect the more awful, even as the vivid lightning amid the storm does not brighten but intensify the thick darkness which lowers around. The ascent to the fatal gallows of Haman was an essential ingredient in the terror of the sentence—"hang him thereon." If the wicked had not been raised so high they could not have fallen so low.

19. "*How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment!*" This is an exclamation of godly wonder at the suddenness and completeness of the sinners' overthrow. Headlong is their fall; without warning, without escape, without hope of future restoration! Despite their golden chains, and goodly apparel, death stays not for manners but hurries them away; and stern justice unbribed by their wealth hurls them into destruction. "*They are utterly consumed with terrors.*" They have neither root nor branch left. They cease to exist among the sons of men, and, in the other world, there is nothing left of their former glory. Like blasted trees, consumed by the lightning, they are monuments of vengeance; like the ruins of Babylon they reveal, in the greatness of their desolation, the judgments of the Lord against all those that unduly exalt themselves. The momentary glory of the graceless is in a moment effaced, their loftiness is in an instant consumed.

20. "*As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.*" They owe their existence and prosperity to the forbearance of God, which the psalmist compares to a sleep; but, as a dream vanishes so soon as a man awakes, so the instant the Lord begins to exercise his justice and call men before him, the pomp and prosperity of proud transgressors shall melt away. When God awakes to judgment, they who despise him shall be despised; they are already "such stuff as dreams are made of," but then the baseless fabric shall not leave a wreck behind. Let them flaunt their little hour, poor unsubstantial sons of dreams; they will soon be gone; when the day breaketh, and the Lord awakes as a mighty man out of his sleep, they will vanish away. Who cares for the wealth of dream-land? Who indeed but fools? Lord, leave us not to the madness which covets unsubstantial wealth, and ever teach us thine own true wisdom.

21 Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.

22 So foolish *was* I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.

23 Nevertheless I *am* continually with thee: thou hast holden *me* by my right hand.

24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me *to* glory.

21. The holy poet here reviews his inward struggle and awards himself censure for his folly. His pain had been intense; he says, "*Thus my heart was grieved.*" It was a deep-seated sorrow, and one which penetrated his inmost being. Alexander reads it, "My heart is soured." His spirit had become embittered; he had judged in a harsh, crabbed, surly manner. He had become atrabilarious, full of black bile, melancholy, and choleric; he had poisoned his own life at the fountain-head, and made all its streams to be bitter as gall. "*And I was pricked in my reins.*" He was as full of pain as a man afflicted with renal disease; he had pierced himself through with many sorrows; his hard thoughts were like so many calculi in his kidneys; he was utterly wretched and woebegone, and all through his own reflections. O miserable philosophy, which stretches the mind on the rack, and breaks it on the wheel! O blessed faith, which drives away the inquisitors, and sets the captives free!

22. "*So foolish was I.*" He, though a saint of God, had acted as if he had been one of the fools whom God abhorreth. Had he not even envied them?—and what is that but to aspire to be like them? The wisest of men have enough folly in them to ruin them unless grace prevents. "*And ignorant.*" He had acted as if he knew nothing, had babbled like an idiot, had uttered the very drivel of a witless loon. He did not know how sufficiently to express his sense of his own fatuity. "*I was as a beast before thee.*" Even in God's presence he had been brutish, and worse than a beast. As the grass-eating ox has but this present life, and can only estimate things thereby, and by the sensual pleasure which they afford, even so had the psalmist judged happiness by this mortal life, by outward appearances, and by fleshly enjoyments. Thus he had, for the time, renounced the dignity of an immortal spirit, and, like a mere animal, judged after the sight of the eyes. We should be very loth to call an inspired man a beast, and yet, penitence made him call himself so; nay, he uses the plural, by way of emphasis, and as if he were worse than any one beast. It was but an evidence of his true wisdom that he was so deeply conscious of his own folly. We see how bitterly good men bewail mental wanderings; they make no excuses for themselves, but set their sins in the pillory, and cast the vilest reproaches upon them. O for grace to detest the very appearance of evil!

23. "*Nevertheless I am continually with thee.*" He does not give up his faith, though he confesses his folly. Sin may distress us, and yet we may be in communion with God. It is sin beloved and delighted in which separates us from the Lord, but when we bewail it heartily, the Lord will not withdraw from us. What a contrast is here in this and the former verse! He is as a beast, and yet continually with God. Our double nature, as it always causes conflict, so is it a continuous paradox: the flesh allies us with the brutes, and the spirit affiliates us to God. "*Thou hast holden me by my right hand.*" With love dost thou embrace me, with honour ennoble me, with power uphold me. He had almost fallen, and yet was always upheld. He was a riddle to himself, as he had been a wonder unto many. This verse contains the two precious mercies of communion and upholding, and as they were both given to one who confessed himself a fool, we also may hope to enjoy them.

24. "*Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel.*" I have done with choosing my own way, and trying to pick a path amid the jungle of reason. He yielded not only the point in debate, but all intention of debating, and he puts his hand into that of the great Father, asking to be led, and agreeing to follow. Our former mistakes are a blessing, when they drive us to this. The end of our own wisdom is the beginning of our being wise. With HIM is counsel,

and when we come to him, we are sure to be led aright. "*And afterward.*" "Afterward!" Blessed word. We can cheerfully put up with the present, when we foresee the future. What is around us just now is of small consequence, compared with afterward. "*Receive me to glory.*" Take me up into thy splendour of joy. Thy guidance shall conduct me to this matchless terminus. Glory shall I have, and thou thyself wilt admit me into it. As Enoch was not, for God took him, so all the saints are taken up—received up into glory.

25 Whom have I in heaven *but thee?* and *there is* none upon earth *that* I desire beside thee.

26 My flesh and my heart faileth: *but* God *is* the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

27 For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.

28 But *it is* good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.

25. "*Whom have I in heaven but thee?*" Thus, then, he turns away from the glitter which fascinated him to the true gold which was his real treasure. He felt that his God was better to him than all the wealth, health, honour, and peace, which he had so much envied in the worldling; yea, He was not only better than all on earth, but more excellent than all in heaven. He bade all things else go, that he might be filled with his God. "*And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.*" No longer should his wishes ramble, no other object should tempt them to stray; henceforth, the Everliving One should be his all in all.

26. "*My flesh and my heart faileth.*" They had failed him already, and he had almost fallen; they would fail him in the hour of death, and, if he relied upon them, they would fail him at once. "*But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*" His God would not fail him, either as a protection or a joy. His heart would be kept up by divine love, and filled eternally with divine glory. After having been driven far out to sea, Asaph casts anchor in the old port. We shall do well to follow his example. There is nothing desirable save God; let us, then, desire only him. All other things must pass away; let our hearts abide in him, who alone abideth for ever.

27. "*For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish.*" We must be near God to live; to be far off by wicked works is death. "*Thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.*" If we pretend to be the Lord's servants, we must remember that he is a jealous God, and requires spiritual chastity from all his people. Offences against conjugal vows are very offensive, and all sins against God have the same element in them, and they are visited with the direst punishments. Mere heathens, who are far from God, perish in due season; but those who, being his professed people, act unfaithfully to their profession, shall come under active condemnation, and be crushed beneath his wrath. We read examples of this in Israel's history; may we never create fresh instances in our own persons.

28. "*But it is good for me to draw near to God.*" Had he done so at first he would not have been immersed in such affliction; when he did so he escaped from his dilemma, and if he continued to do so he would not fall into the same evil again. The greater our nearness to God, the less we are affected by the attractions and distractions of earth. Access into the most holy place is a great privilege, and a cure for a multitude of ills. It is good for all saints, it is good for me in particular; it is always good, and always will be good for me to approach the greatest good, the source of all good, even God himself. "*I have put my trust in the Lord God.*" He dwells upon the glorious name of the Lord Jehovah, and avows it as the basis of his faith. Faith is wisdom; it is the key of

enigmas, the clue of mazes, and the pole star of pathless seas. Trust and you will know. "*That I may declare all thy works.*" He who believes shall understand, and so be able to teach. Asaph hesitated to utter his evil surmisings, but he has no diffidence in publishing abroad a good matter. God's ways are the more admired the more they are known. He who is ready to believe the goodness of God shall always see fresh goodness to believe in, and he who is willing to declare the works of God shall never be silent for lack of wonders to declare.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—The Seventy-third Psalm is a very striking record of the mental struggle which an eminently pious Jew underwent, when he contemplated the respective conditions of the righteous and the wicked. Fresh from the conflict, he somewhat abruptly opens the Psalm with the confident enunciation of the truth of which victory over doubt had now made him more and more intelligently sure than ever, that "*God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.*" And then he relates the most fatal shock which his faith had received, when he contrasted the prosperity of the wicked, who, though they proudly contemned God and man, prospered in the world and increased in riches, with his own lot, who, though he had cleansed his heart and washed his hands in innocency, had been "plagued all the day long and chastened every morning." The place where his doubts were removed and his tottering faith re-established, was "the sanctuary of God." God himself was the Teacher. What, then, did he teach? By what divinely imparted considerations was the psalmist reassured? Whatever is the proper rendering of the fourth verse; whether, "There are no sorrows (tending) to their death," or, "There are no sorrows *until* their death,"—their whole life to the very last is one unchequered course of happiness—that verse conveys to us the psalmist's *mistaken* estimate of the prosperity of the wicked, before he went unto the sanctuary of God. The true estimate, at which he afterwards arrived, is found in verses 18—20. Now, admitting (what, by the way, is somewhat difficult of belief, inasmuch as the sudden and fearful temporal destruction of *all* or even the *most* prosperous cannot be made out) that the end of these men "means only and always their end *in this world*, we come to the conclusion that, in the case of the wicked, this Psalm does not plainly and undeniably teach that punishment awaits them after death; but only that, in estimating their condition, it is necessary, in order to vindicate the justice of God, to take in their whole career, and set over against their great prosperity the sudden and fearful reverses and destruction which they not unfrequently encounter. But, in turning to the other side of the comparison, the case of the righteous, we are *not* met by the thought, that as the prosperity of the wicked is but the preparation for their ruin, the raising higher the tower that the fall may be the greater, so the adversity of the godly is but an introduction to worldly wealth and honour. That thought is not foreign to the Old Testament writers. "Evildoers shall be cut off;" writes one of them, "but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." Psalm xxxvii. 9—11. *But it is not so much as hinted at here.* The daily chastening may continue, flesh and heart may fail, but God is good to Israel notwithstanding: he is their portion, their guide, their help while they live, and he will take them to his glorious presence when they die. "Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." The New Testament has nothing higher or more spiritual than this. The reference of the last clause to happiness after death is, I believe, generally

acknowledged by Jewish commentators. They left it to the candour of Christian expositors to doubt or deny it.—*Thomas Thomason Perowne, in "The Essential Coherence of the Old and New Testaments."* 1858.

Whole Psalm.—In Psalm Seventy-three the soul looks *out*, and reasons on what it sees there; namely, successful wickedness and suffering righteousness. What is the conclusion? "I have cleansed my heart in vain." So much for looking about. In Psalm Seventy-seven the soul looks *in*, and reasons on what it finds there. What is the conclusion? "Hath God forgotten to be gracious?" So much for looking in. Where, then, should we look? Look *up*, straight up, and *believe* what you see there. What will be the conclusion? You will understand the "*end*" of man, and trace the "*way*" of God.—*From "Things New and Old, a Monthly Magazine."* 1858.

Whole Psalm.—In this Psalm, the psalmist (Asaph) relates the great difficulty which existed in his own mind, from the consideration of the wicked. He observes (verses 2 and 3), "As for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." In the fourth and following verses he informs us what, in the wicked, was his temptation. In the first place, he observed, that they were *prosperous*, and all things went well with them. He then observed their *behaviour* in their prosperity, and the use which they made of it; and that God, notwithstanding such abuse, *continued* their prosperity. Then he tells us by what means he was helped out of this difficulty, viz., by going into the *sanctuary* (verses 16 and 17), and proceeds to inform us what considerations they were which helped him, viz.—1. The consideration of the *miserable end* of wicked men. However they prosper for the present, yet they come to a woeful end at last (verses 18—20). 2. The consideration of the *blessed end* of the saints. Although the saints, while they live, may be afflicted, yet they come to a happy end at last (verses 21—24). 3. The consideration that the godly have a much *better portion* than the wicked, even though they have no other portion but God; as in verses 25, 26. Though the wicked are in prosperity, and are not in trouble as other men; yet the godly, though in affliction, are in a state infinitely better, because they have God for their portion. They need desire nothing else; he that hath God hath all. Thus the psalmist professes the sense and apprehension which he had of things: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." In the twenty-fourth verse the psalmist takes notice how the saints are happy in God, both when they are in this world and also when they are taken to another. They are blessed in God in this world, in that *he guides them by his counsel;* and when he takes them out of it they are still happy, in that he *receives them to glory.* This probably led him to declare that he desired *no other portion*, either in this world or in that to come, either in heaven or upon earth.—*Jonathan Edwards.*

Verse 1.—"*Truly*:" it's but a particle; but the smallest filings of gold are gathered up. Little pearls are of great price. And this small particle is not of small use, being rightly applied and improved. First, take it (as our translators give it us) as *a note of asseveration.* "*Truly.*" It's a word of faith, opposite to the psalmist's sense and Satan's injections. Whatsoever sense sees or feels, whatsoever Satan insinuates and says; yet precious faith with confidence asserts, "*Truly, verily God is good.*" He is not only good in word, but in deed also. Not only seemingly good, but certainly good. Secondly, consider it as *an adversative particle*, "*Yet*," so our old translation. Ainsworth renders it, *yet surely;* taking in the former and this together. And then the sense runs thus: How ill soever things go in the world, how ill soever it fares with God's church and people amongst men, *yet God is good* to Israel. Thirdly, some conceive that the word carries *admiration.* Oh, how good is God to Israel. Where expressions and apprehensions fail, there the psalmist takes up God's providences with admiration. Oh, how wonderfully, how transcendently good is God to Israel!

This "*yet*" (as I conceive) hath a threefold reference to the body of the Psalm. For as interpreters observe, though these words are set in the beginning, yet they suggest the conclusion of the psalmist's conflict. And the psalmist seems to begin somewhat abruptly: "*Yet God is good.*" But having filled his thoughts with his former foiles and fears, and now seeing himself in a safe condition both for the present and the future, he is full of confidence and comfort; and that which was the strongest and chiefest in his heart now breaks out first: "*Yet God is good.*" 1. This "*yet*" relates unto his sufferings, verse 14: "*All the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.*" Notwithstanding the variety and frequency of the saint's sufferings, "*yet God is good.*" Though sorrow salutes them every morning at their first awaking, and trouble attends them to bed at night, "*yet God is good.*" Though temptations many and terrible make batteries and breeches upon their spirits, "*yet God is good to Israel.*" 2. This "*yet*" reflects upon his sinnings, the frettings and wranglings of his distempered heart (verses 2, 3, and verse 21) Though sinful motions do mutiny in the soul against God's wise administrations, though there be foolish, proud quarrellings with divine providences, and inexcusable distrust of his faithful promises; though fretfulness at others' prosperity and discontent at their own adversity. "*yet God is good.*" Israel's sinful distempers cause not the Almighty to change the course of his accustomed goodness. While corruptions are kept from breaking out into scandal, while the soul contends against them, and is humbled for them (as the psalmist was), this conclusion must be maintained: "*yet God is good.*" 3. This "*yet*" looks back upon his misgivings. There had been distrustful despondency upon the good man's heart. For from both the premises (viz., his sufferings and sinnings) he had inferred this conclusion, verse 13, "*Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.*" As if he had said, "I have kept fasts, observed Sabbaths, heard sermons, made prayers, received sacraments, given alms, avoided sins, resisted temptations, withstood lusts, appeared for Christ and his cause and servants in vain: yea, his heart had added an asseveration (*verily*) to this faithless opinion, but now he is of another mind: "*Yet God is good.*" The administrations of God are not according to the sad surmises of his people's misgiving hearts. For, though they through diffidence are apt often to give up their holy labours as lost, and all their conscientious care and carriage as utterly cast away; "*yet God is good to Israel.*"—*Simeon Ash, in a Sermon entitled* "*God's Incomparable Goodness unto Israel.*" 1647.

Verse 1.—David opens the Psalm abruptly, and from this we learn what is worthy of particular notice, that, before he broke forth into this language, his mind had been agitated with many doubts and conflicting suggestions. As a brave and valiant champion, he had been exercised in very painful struggles and temptations; but, after long and arduous exertion, he at length succeeded in shaking off all perverse imaginations, and came to the conclusion that *yet* God is gracious to his servants, and the faithful guardian of their welfare. Thus these words contain a tacit contrast between the unhallowed imaginations suggested to him by Satan, and the testimony in favour of true religion with which he now strengthens himself, denouncing, as it were, the judgment of the flesh, in giving place to misgiving thoughts with respect to the providence of God. We see, then, how emphatic is this exclamation of the psalmist. He does not ascend into the chair to dispute after the manner of the philosophers, and to deliver his discourse in a style of studied oratory; but, as if he had escaped from hell, he proclaims with a loud voice, and with impassioned feeling, that he had obtained the victory.—*John Calvin.*

***Verse* 1** (*first clause*).—

> Yet sure the gods are good: I would think so,
> If they would give me leave!
> But virtue in distress, and vice in triumph,
> Make atheists of mankind.
>
> *Dryden.*

Verse 1.—"*God is good.*" There is a beauty in the name appropriated by the Saxon nations to the Deity, unequalled except by his most reverential Hebrew appellation. They called him "GOD," which is literally "THE GOOD." The same word thus signifying the Deity, and his most endearing quality.—*Turner.*

Verse 1.—"*God is good.*" Let the devil and his instruments say what they will to the contrary, I will never believe them; I have said it before, and I see no reason to reverse my sentence; "*Truly God is good.*" Though sometimes he may hide his face for awhile, yet he doth that in faithfulness and love; there is kindness in his very scourges, and love bound up in his rods; he is good to Israel: do but mark it first or last: "The true Israelite, in whom there is no guile, shall be refreshed by his Saviour." The Israelite that wrestles with tears with God, and values his love above the whole world, that will not be put off without his Father's blessing, shall have it with a witness: "He shall reap in joy though he may at present sow in tears. Even to such as are of a clean heart." The false-hearted hypocrite, indeed, that gives God only his tongue and lip, cap and knee, but reserves his heart and love for sin and the word, that hath much of compliment, but nothing of affection and reality, why let such a one never expect, while in such a state, to taste those reviving comforts that I have been treating of; while he drives such a trade, he must not expect God's company.—*James Janeway.* 1636—1674.

Verse 1.—"*Even to such as are of a clean heart.*" Purity of heart is the characteristical note of God's people. Heart-purity denominates us the Israel of God; it makes us of Israel indeed; but all are not Israel which are of Israel." Romans ix. 6. Purity of heart is the jewel which is hung only upon the elect. As chastity distinguisheth a virtuous woman from an harlot, so the true saint is distinguished from the hypocrite by his heart-purity. This is like the nobleman's star or garter, which is a peculiar ensign of honour, differing him from the vulgar; when the bright star of purity shineth in a Christian's heart it doth distinguish him from the formal professor. . . . .

God "*is good*" to the pure in heart. We all desire that God should be good to us; it is the sick man's prayer: "The Lord be good to me." But how is God good to them? Two ways. 1. To them that are pure all things are sanctified, Titus i. 15: "To the pure all things are pure;" estate is sanctified, relations are sanctified; as the temple did sanctify the gold and the altar did sanctify the offering. To the unclean nothing is clean; their table is a snare, their temple-devotion a sin. There is a curse entailed upon a wicked man (Deut. xxviii. 16), but holiness removeth the curse, and cuts off the entail: "to the pure all things are pure." 2. The clean hearted have all things work for their good. Romans viii. 28. Mercies and afflictions shall turn to their good; the most poisonous drugs shall be medicinal; the most cross providence shall carry on the design of their salvation. Who, then, would not be clean in heart?—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 2.—"*But as for me.*" Literally, it is, *And I*, which ought to be read with emphasis; for David means that those temptations which cast an affront upon the honour of God, and overwhelm faith, not only assail the common class of men, or those who are endued only with some small measure of the fear of God. but that he himself, who ought to have profited above all others in the school of God, had experienced his own share of them. By thus setting himself forth as an example, he designed the more effectually to arouse and incite us to take great heed to ourselves.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 2.—Let such also as fear God and begin to look aside on the things of this world, know it will be hard even for them to hold out in faith and in the fear of God in time of trial. Remember the example of David, he was a man that had spent much time in travelling towards heaven; yet, looking but a little aside upon the glittering show of this world, had very near lost his way, his feet were almost gone, his steps had well nigh slipt.—*Edward Elton.* 1620.

Verse 2.—He tells us that his "*feet were almost gone.*" The word signifies *to bow*, or *bend under one.* "My steps had *well nigh slipped*," or *poured out, kept not* within their *true bounds;* but like water *poured out*, and not confined, runs aside. Though these expressions be metaphorical, and seemingly dark and cloudy, yet they clearly represent unto us this truth, that his *understanding* was *misguided*, his *judgment* was *corrupt*, his *affections disordered*, turbulent, and guilty of too great a passion; and this, the consequents (verse 22 in which he acknowledges himself *ignorant, foolish*, and *brutish*) do sufficiently evidence. Our *understanding* and *judgment* may well bear the comparison to *feet*, for as the one, in our motion, *supports the body*, so the other, in human actions and all employments, *underprops the soul.* The *affections*, also, are as *paths* and *steps;* as these of the *feet*, so these are the *prints* and expressions of the judgment and mind. —*Edward Parry, in "David Restored."* 1660.

Verse 2.—"*Almost gone.*" There is to be noted that the prophet said he was *almost* gone, and not altogether. Here is the presence, providence, strength, safeguard, and keeping of man by Almighty God, marvellously set forth. That although we are tempted and brought even to the very point to perpetrate and do all mischief, yet he stays us and keeps us, that the temptation shall not overcome us.—*John Hooper.* 1495—1555.

Verses 2–14.—But the prosperity of wicked and unjust men, both in public and in private life, who, though not leading a happy life in reality, are yet thought to do so in common opinion, being praised improperly in the works of poets, and all kinds of books, may lead you—and I am not surprised at your mistake—to a belief that the gods care nothing for the affairs of men. These matters disturb you. Being led astray by foolish thoughts, and yet not being able to think ill of the gods, you have arrived at your present state of mind, so as to think that the gods do indeed exist, but that they despise and neglect human affairs. —*Plato.*

Verse 3.—"*I was envious at the foolish*," etc. If we consider with ourselves how unlikely a thing it is to grow big with riches, and withal to enter through the eye of a needle, how unusual a thing it is to be emparadised in this life and yet enthroned in that to come, it will afford us matter of comfort if we are piously improsperous as well as of terror if we are prosperously impious. We should be taught by the precept of the prophet David *not to fret ourselves because of evildoers*, nor to be envious against the workers of iniquity; for "The prosperity of fools shall but destroy them," saith Solomon, and "the candle of the wicked shall be put out." Prov. xxiv. 1, 2, 19, 20. Prosperity it seems is a dangerous weapon, and none but the innocent should dare to use it. The psalmist himself, before he thought upon this, began to envy the prosperity of wicked men.—*William Crouch, in "The Enormous Sin of Covetousness detected."* 1708.

Verse 3.—"*I was envious at the foolish*." Who would envy a malefactor's going up a high ladder, and being mounted above the rest of the people, when it is only for a little, and in order to his being turned over and hanged? That is just the case of wicked men who are mounted up high in prosperity; for it is so only that they may be cast down deeper into destruction. It would be a brutish thing to envy an ox his high and sweet pasture, when he is only thereby fitted for the day of slaughter. Who would have envied the beasts of old the garlands and ribbons with which the heathen adorned them when they went to be sacrificed? These external ornaments of health, wealth, pleasures, and preferments, wherewith wicked men are endowed, cannot make their state happy, nor change their natures for the better. Whatever appearance these things make in the eyes of the world, they are but like a noisome dunghill covered with scarlet, as vile and loathsome in God's sight as ever. How quickly is the beauty of earthly things blasted. "The triumphing of the wicked *is* short." Job xx. 5. They live in pleasures on the earth for awhile, but God "sets them in slippery places," from whence they soon slide into perpetual pain

and anguish. They have a short time of mirth, but they shall have an eternity of mourning.—*John Willison.*

Verse 3.—"*For I was envious at the foolish.*" The sneering jest of Dionysius the younger, a tyrant of Sicily, when, after having robbed the Temple of Syracuse, he had a prosperous voyage with the plunder, is well known. "See you not," says he to those who were with him, "how the gods favour the sacrilegious?" In the same way the prosperity of the wicked is taken as an encouragement to commit sin; for we are ready to imagine that, since God grants them so much of the good things of this life, they are the objects of his approbation and favour. We see how their prosperous condition wounded David to the heart, leading him almost to think that there was nothing better for him than to join himself to their company, and to follow their course of life.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 3.—"*Envious.*" If you are touched with envy at *seeing the peace of the wicked*, shut your eyes, do not look at it, for envious eyes think anything vast on which they gaze. Actius Sincerus, a man of rare wit and great reputation, when in the presence of king Frederic, witnessed a discussion among physicians on what would most effectually sharpen the eyesight? The fumes of fennel, said some; the use of a glass, said others; some one thing, some another: but I, said he, replied, Envy. The doctors were astonished, and much amusement afforded to the audience at their expense. Then I continued: Does not Envy make all things seem larger and fuller? And what could be more to your purpose than that the very faculty of seeing should itself be made greater and stronger.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 3.—"*The prosperity of the wicked.*" Socrates, being asked what would be vexatious to good men, replied, "The prosperity of the bad." What would vex the bad? "The prosperity of the good."—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 3.—Diogenes, the cynic, seeing Harpalus, a vicious fellow, still thriving in the world, he was bold to say that wicked Harpalus's living long in prosperity was an argument that God had cast off his care of the world, that he cared not which end went forward. But he was a heathen. Yet, for all that, the lights of the sanctuary have burnt dim; stars of no small magnitude have twinkled; men of eminent parts, famous in their generation for religion and piety, have staggered in their judgment to see the flourishing estate of the wicked. It made Job to complain, and Jeremiah to expostulate with God; and David was even ready to sink in seeing the prosperity of ungodly men: to see the one in wealth, the other in want; the one honourable, the other despised; the one upon a throne, the other on a dunghill.—*John Donne.*

Verse 4.—"*There are no bands in their death,*" etc. That is, when they die, they die in their strength, they do not pine away with long and tedious sickness; they live in pleasure, and die with ease. They are not bound to their beds, and tied down with the cords of chronical, lingering diseases.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 4.—"*There are no bands in their death,*" etc. It is not their lot to look upon frequent and bitter deaths, like the righteous, nor is there in their affliction any firmness or permanence. If at any time affliction falls upon them, they are speedily delivered from it. Moreover, whatever calamity happens to them, they have the strength and support of riches; and, elevated by their wealth, they appear to forget their troubles.—*Cornelius Jansenius.* 1510—1576.

Verse 4.—"*There are no bands in their death.*" The Hebrew word חֲרְצֻבּוֹת signifieth a *band* which is *knotted* or *tied;* and then the sense may be, they have not that which might bind them over unto a speedy and troublesome death; hence, *Castelio* writes, *non sunt necessitates quæ eos enecent.* there are no necessities which threaten their death—such as variety of distempers, sicknesses, and diseases, those messengers of death. *Aquila*, therefore, renders the word οὐκ εἰσὶ δυσπαθείαι, there are no pangs or distempers; no *sorrows* or sicknesses, saith

Ainsworth: they are *not bound over to death or execution* by the variety of diseases, or by the power of injury of others. The prophet, by telling us "*their strength is firm,*" expounds this phrase, and lets us know that these wicked men had lives spun of *even threads*, without danger of *ravelling* or *breaking*. They had lusty bodies, strong limbs, sound vitals, without agonies or ruptures; lived as those that had no cause to fear death; and when they expired, it was without much antecedent pain; they fell as ripe apples from the tree.—*Edward Parry.*

Verse 4.—By "*bands*" we may understand, any heavy burdens, which are wont to be *bound* on them upon whom they are laid; and so, by way of analogy, any grievous pains or torturing diseases. "*Their strength is firm,*" continues vigorous till their death.—*Thomas Fenton.*

Verse 4.—"*In their death.*" It comes upon them in vigorous health, for they are strong and robust, and drag not out a sickly existence through continuous complaints. Some regard the bands of death as hindrances, as if it were said—They suddenly die, in a moment, nor are they racked with pains, as in Job xxi. 13. It is considered the highest felicity for the profane, when they have enjoyed the pleasures and the pomp of life, to descend in an instant to the grave. Even Julius Cæsar, on the day before he was slain, declared that it seemed to him to be a happy death to die suddenly and unexpectedly. Therefore, according to these interpreters, David complains that the ungodly, without the vexations of disease, pass on to death by a smooth and tranquil course; but there is more truth in the opinion of those who, reading both clauses of the verse together, their strength is firm, and there are no bands to death, think that they are not dragged to death like captives; for since diseases overcome our strength, they are so many messengers of death to admonish us of our frailty. They are not, therefore, in vain compared to chains with which God binds us to his yoke lest vigour and strength should incite us to be froward. "*But their strength is firm.*"—*Franciscus Vatablus.*

Verse 4.—Men may die like lambs and yet have their place for ever with the goats.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 5.—"*They are not in the trouble of men,*" for God has given them over to the desires of their own hearts, that they who are filthy may be filthy still: like a sick man, are they, to whom a wise physician forbids nothing, since the disease is incurable.—*Gerhohus.*

Verse 5.—"*Other men.*" Hebrew, אָדָם *Adam:* the *whole human race.*—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 6.—A chain of pearl doth not better become their necks, nor the richest robes adorn their backs, than sin doth, in their judgments, become and suit their souls; they glory in their shame. Plato saith of Protagoras that he boasted, whereas he had lived sixty years, he had spent forty years in corrupting youth. They brag of that which they ought to bewail.—*George Swinnock.*

Verse 6.—"*Violence covereth them as a garment.*" They wear it, and shew it openly as their garment. See the like phrase of cursing, Ps. cix. 18, 19. But the meek, and godly, cover themselves otherwise, Eph. iv. 24; Col. iii. 10, 12, 14, etc.—*John Richardson.*

Verse 7.—"*Their eyes.*" "A man may be known by his look," saith the son of Sirach, Ecclus. xix. 29. The choleric, the lascivious, the melancholy, the cunning, &c., frequently bear their tempers and ruling passions strongly marked on their countenances: but more especially doth the soul of a man look forth at his "*eyes.*"—*George Horne.*

Verse 7 (*first clause*).—They sink others' eyes into their heads with leanness, while their own eyes "*stand out with fatness.*"—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 8.—"*They are corrupt.*" Prosperity, in an irreligious heart, breeds

corruption, which from thence is emitted by the breath in conversation, to infect and taint the minds of others.—*George Horne.*

Verse 8.—"*They speak wickedly concerning oppression.*" Indeed, we see that wicked men, after having for some time got everything to prosper according to their desires, cast off all shame, and are at no pains to conceal themselves, when about to commit iniquity, but loudly proclaim their own turpitude. "What!" they will say, "is it not in my power to deprive you of all that you possess, and even to cut your throat?" Robbers, it is true, can do the same thing; but then they hide themselves for fear. These giants, or rather inhuman monsters, of whom David speaks, on the contrary not only imagine that they are exempted from subjection to any law, but, unmindful of their own weakness, foam furiously, as if there were no distinction between good and evil, between right and wrong.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 9.—"*Their tongue walketh through the earth.*" This shows the boundless and unlimited disorder of the tongue. The earth carries a numerous offspring of men, who are of several habits, states, and conditions, which give occasion of variety of discourses and different kinds of language. These men spare none: "*Their tongue walketh through the earth*," and leaves nothing unspoken of. If men be *poor*, they talk of oppressing and mastering of them; if they *oppose*, they discourse of violence and suppressing. . . . . If in this perambulation they meet with *truth*, they darken it with lies and home-made inventions; if with *innocence*, they brand it with false accusations and bitter aspersions; if with a strict government and *good laws*, then they cry, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us;" if with *religion*, they term it *heresy*, or superstition; if with *patience*, they term it obstinacy and perverseness; if with the *church*, they think of nothing less than devouring it, and cry, "Let us take the houses of God in possession;" if with the thoughts of a resurrection, and of future hopes, "Let us eat and drink," cry they, "for to-morrow we shall die." Thus no corner is left unsearched by their *abusive tongue, which walks through the earth.* . . . . They may *walk over the earth*, but they will "*set their mouth against the heavens.*" Here they stay, stand fixed and resolute, and take that place, as a special white they would hit.—*Edward Parry.*

Verse 10.—"*Therefore his people return hither.*" It seems impossible to ascertain, with any degree of precision, the meaning of this verse, or to whom it relates. Some think it intends those people who resort to the company of the wicked, because they find their temporal advantage by it; while others are of opinion that the people of God are meant, who, by continually revolving in their thoughts the subject here treated of, namely, the prosperity of the wicked, are sore grieved and forced to shed tears in abundance. Mr. Mudge translates the verse thus: "*Therefore let his (God's) people come before them, and waters in full measure would be wrung out from them;*" that is, should God's people fall into their hands, they would squeeze them to the full, they would wring out all the juice out of their bodies. He takes *waters in full measure* to have been a proverbial expression.—*Samuel Burder.*

Verse 11.—"*How doth God know?*" etc. Men may not disbelieve a Godhead; nay, they may believe there is a God, and yet question the truth of his threatenings. Those conceits that men have of God, whereby they mould and frame him in their fancies, suitable to their humours, which is a thinking that he is such a one as ourselves (Psalm l.), are steams and vapours from this pit, and the "hearts of the sons of men are desperately set within them to do evil" upon these grounds; much more when they arise so high as in some who say: "*How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?*" If men give way to this, what reason can be imagined to stand before them? All the comminations of Scripture are derided as so many theological scarecrows, and

undervalued as so many pitiful contrivances to keep men in awe.— *Richard Gilpin.*

Verse 11.—Ovid thus speaks in one of his verses: "*Sollicitor nullos esse putare deos;*" I am tempted to think that there are no gods.

Verse 14.—"*All the day long have I been plagued,*" etc. Sickly tempers must have a medicinal diet: to be purged both at spring and fall will scarce secure some from the malignity of their distempers. The Lord knows our frame, and sees what is usually needful for every temper; and when he afflicts most frequently, he does no more than he sees requisite.—*David Clarkson.*

Verse 14.—If a man be watchful over his own ways, and the dealings of God with him, there is seldom a day but he may find some rod of affliction upon him; but, as through want of care and watchfulness, we lose the sight of many mercies, so we do of many afflictions. Though God doth not every day bring a man to his bed, and break his bones, yet we seldom, if at all, pass a day without some rebuke and chastening. "*I have been chastened every morning,*" saith the psalmist. . . . . As sure, or as soon, as I rise I have a whipping, and my breakfast is bread of sorrow and the water of adversity. . . . . Our lives are full of afflictions; and it is as great a part of a Christian's skill to know afflictions as to know mercies; to know when God smites, as to know when he girds us; and it is our sin to overlook afflictions as well as to overlook mercies.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 14.—The way to heaven is an *afflicted way*, a perplexed, persecuted way, *crushed close* together with crosses, as was the Israelites' way in the wilderness, or that of Jonathan and his armour-bearer, that had a sharp rock on the one side and a sharp rock on the other. And, whilst they crept upon all four, flinty stones were under them, briars and thorns on either hand of them; mountains, crags, and promontories over them; *sic potitur cælum*, so heaven is caught by pains, by patience, by violence, affliction being our inseparable companion. "The cross way is the highway to heaven," said that martyr [Bradford]; and another, "If there be any way to heaven on horseback, it is by the cross." Queen Elizabeth is said to have swum to the crown through a sea of sorrows. They that will to heaven, must sail by hell-gates; they that will have knighthood, must kneel for it; and they that will get in at the strait gate, must crowd for it. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate," saith our Saviour; strive and strain, even to an *agony*, as the word signifieth. Heaven is compared to a hill; hell to a hole. To hell a man may go without a staff, as we say; the way thereto is easy, steep, strawed with roses; 'tis but a yielding to Satan, a passing from sin to sin, from evil purposes to evil practices, from practice to custom, etc. *Sed revocare gradum*, but to turn short again, and make straight steps to our feet, that we may force through the strait gate, *hic labor, hoc opus est, opus non pulvinaris sed pulveris;* this is a work of great pains, a duty of no small difficulty.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 15.—"*I should offend,*" etc. That is, I do God's church a great deal of injury, which hath always been under afflictions, if I think or say, that all her piety hath been without hope, or her hope without effect. Others understand it to mean, I deceive the generation, *viz.*, I propound a false doctrine unto them, which is apt to seduce them. Others, "behold the generation," etc.; that is to say, notwithstanding all afflictions, it is certain that thou art a Father to the Church only; which is sufficient to make me judge well of these afflictions; I have done ill, and confess I have erred in this my rash judgment.—*John Diodati.*

Verse 17.—By the *sanctuaries of God* some, even among the Hebrews, understand the celestial mansions in which the spirits of the just and angels dwell; as if David had said, This was a painful thing in my sight, until I came to acknowledge in good earnest that men are not created to flourish for a short

time in this world, and to luxuriate in pleasures while in it, but that their condition here is that of pilgrims, whose aspirations, during their earthly pilgrimage, should be towards heaven. I readily admit that no man can form a right judgment of the providence of God but he who elevates his mind above the earth; but it is more simple and natural to understand the word "*sanctuary*" as denoting celestial doctrine. As the book of the law was laid up in the sanctuary, from which the oracles of heaven were to be obtained, that is to say, the declaration of the will of God; and as this was the true way of acquiring profitable instruction, David very properly puts *entering into the sanctuaries* for *coming to the school of God*, as if his meaning were this: Until God become my schoolmaster, and until I learn by his word what otherwise my mind, when I come to consider the government of the world, cannot comprehend, I stop short all at once, and understand nothing about the subject. When, therefore, we are here told that men are unfit for contemplating the arrangements of divine providence, until they obtain wisdom elsewhere than from themselves, how can we attain to wisdom but by submissively receiving what God teaches us, both by his word and by his Holy Spirit? David by the word "*sanctuary*" alludes to the external manner of teaching, which God had appointed among his ancient people; but along with the word he comprehends the secret illumination of the Holy Spirit.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 17.—The joy of a wicked man is imperfect in itself, because it is not so as it seems to be, or it is not sincerely so. 'Tis not pure gold, but alloyed and adulterated with sorrow. It may look well to one that is blear eyed, but it will not pass for good to one that looks well to it. Let any one consider and weigh it well in the balance of *the sanctuary*, whither David went to fetch the scales for the same purpose, and he will find it too light by many grains. 'Tis not so withinside as it is without; no more than a mud wall that is plastered with white, or a stinking grave covered with a glorious monument. It is ὕπουλος, looking fair and smooth, like true joy; as a wounded member that is healed too soon (and you know how God by the prophet complains of the hurt of his people that was slightly healed, Jer. vi. 14), and it looks as well as any other part of the body; but, underneath, there is still a sore, which festers so much more, and is the worse, for that the outside is so well. Where pretences, and cloaks, and disguises are the fairest; there the knavery, and the poison, and the evil concealed are usually foulest.—*Zachary Bogan* (1625—1659), in "*Meditations of the Mirth of a Christian Life.*"

Verse 17.—"*Then understood I.*" There is a famous story of providence in Bradwardine to this purpose. A certain hermit that was much tempted, and was utterly unsatisfied concerning the providence of God, resolved to journey from place to place till he met with some who could satisfy him. An angel in the shape of a man joined himself with him as he was journeying, telling him that he was sent from God to satisfy him in his doubts of providence. The first night they lodged at the house of a very holy man, and they spent their time in discourses of heaven, and praises of God, and were entertained with a great deal of freedom and joy. In the morning, when they departed, the angel took with him a great cup of gold. The next night they came to the house of another holy man, who made them very welcome, and exceedingly rejoiced in their society and discourse; the angel, notwithstanding, at his departure killed an infant in the cradle, which was his only son, he having been for many years before childless, and, therefore, was a very fond father of this child. The third night they came to another house, where they had like free entertainment as before. The master of the family had a steward whom he highly prized, and told them how happy he accounted himself in having such a faithful servant. Next morning he sent this his steward with them part of their way, to direct them therein. As they were going over the bridge the angel flung the steward into the river and drowned him. The last night they came to a very wicked man's house, where they had very untoward entertainment, yet the angel, next morning, gave him the cup of gold. All this being done, the angel asked the hermit

whether he understood those things? He answered, his doubts of providence were increased, not resolved, for he could not understand why he should deal so hardly with those holy men, who received them with so much love and joy, and yet give such a gift to that wicked man who used them so unworthily. The angel said, I will now expound these things unto you. The first house where we came the master of it was a holy man; yet, drinking in that cup every morning, it being too large, it did somewhat unfit him for holy duties, though not so much that others or himself did perceive it; so I took it away, since it is better for him to lose the cup of gold than his temperance. The master of the family where we lay the second night was a man given much to prayer and meditation, and spent much time in holy duties, and was very liberal to the poor all the time he was childless; but as soon as he had a son he grew so fond of it, and spent so much time in playing with it, that he exceedingly neglected his former holy exercise, and gave but little to the poor, thinking he could never lay up enough for his child; therefore I have taken the infant to heaven, and left him to serve God better upon earth. The steward whom I did drown had plotted to kill his master the night following; and as to that wicked man to whom I gave the cup of gold, he was to have nothing in the other world, I therefore gave him something in this, which, notwithstanding, will prove a snare to him, for he will be more intemperate; and "let him that is filthy be filthy still." The truth of this story I affirm not, but the moral is very good, for it shows that God is an indulgent Father to the saints when he most afflicts them; and that when he sets the wicked on high he sets them also in slippery places, and their prosperity is their ruin. Proverbs i. 32.—*Thomas White, in "A Treatise of the Power of Godlinesse."* 1658.

Verse 17.—"*Their end.*" Providence is often mysterious and a source of perplexity to us. Walking in Hyde Park one day, I saw a piece of paper on the grass. I picked it up; it was a part of a letter; the beginning was wanting, the end was not there; I could make nothing of it. Such is providence. You cannot see beginning or end, only a part. When you can see the whole, then the mystery will be unveiled.—*Thomas Jones.* 1871.

Verse 18.—"*Slippery places.*" The word in the original signifies *slick*, or *smooth*, as ice or polished marble, and is from thence by a metaphor used for flattery. Hence, Abenezra renders it, *In locis adulationis posuisti eos:* thou hast set them in places of flattery..—*Edward Parry.*

Verse 18. They are but exalted, as the shellfish by the eagle, according to the naturalists, to be thrown down on some rock and devoured. Their most glorious prosperity is but like a rainbow, which showeth itself for a little time in all its gaudy colours, and then vanisheth. The Turks, considering the unhappy end of their viziers, use this proverb, "He that is in the greatest office is but a statue of glass." Wicked men walk on glass or ice, "*thou hast set them in slippery places;*" on a sudden their feet slip—they fall, and break their necks.—*George Swinnock.*

Verses 18, 20.—Their banqueting-house is very *slippery*, and the feast itself a mere *dream.*—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 19.—"*They are utterly consumed with terrors.*" Their destruction is not only sudden, but entire; it is like the breaking in pieces of a potter's vessel, a sherd of which cannot be gathered up and used; or like the casting of a millstone into the sea, which will never rise more; and this is done "*with terrors,*" either by terrible judgments inflicted on them from without, or with terrors inwardly seizing upon their minds and consciences, as at the time of temporal calamities, or at death, and certainly at the judgment, when the awful sentence will be pronounced upon them. See Job xxvii. 20.—*John Gill.*

Verse 19.—If thou shouldst live the longest measure of time that any man hath done, and spend all that time in nothing but pleasures (which no man ever did but met with some crosses, afflictions, or sicknesses), but at the evening

of this life must take up thy lodging in the "everlasting burnings" and "devouring fire" (Isaiah xxx. 14); were those pleasures answerable to these everlasting burnings? An English merchant that lived at Dantzic, now with God, told us this story, and it was true. A friend of his (a merchant also), upon what grounds I know not, went to a convent, and dined with some friars. His entertainment was very noble. After he had dined and seen all, the merchant fell to commending their pleasant lives: "Yea," said one of the friars to him, "we live gallantly indeed, had we anybody to go to hell for us when we die."—*Giles Firmin* (1617—1617), *in* "*The Real Christian, or, A Treatise of Effectual Calling.*"

Verse 20.—"*As a dream when one awaketh.*" The conception is rather subtle, but seems to have been shrewdly penetrated by Shakspere, who makes the Plantagenet prince (affecting, perhaps, the airs of a ruler in God's stead) say to his discarded favourite—

> "I have long dreamt of such a kind of man,
> So surfeit-swelled, so old and so profane,
> But being awake I do despise my dream."
> *Henry IV.*

For as it is the inertness of the sleeper's will and intellect that gives reality to the shapes and figments, the very sentiments and purposes that throng his mind; so it seems, as it were, to be the negligence and oversight of the Moral Ruler that makes to prosper the wicked or inane life and influence. So Paul says, in reference to the polytheism of the ancient world: "and the times of this ignorance God winked at." Acts xvii. 30.—*C. B. Cayley, in* "*The Psalms in Metre.*" 1860.

Verse 21.—"*Thus my heart was grieved,*" etc. Two similitudes are used, by which his grief and indignation or zeal are described. First, he says his heart boiled over like yeast. The passion which was stirred up in his thoughts he compares to the yeast which inflates the whole mass, and causes it to swell or boil over. . . . . The other simile is taken from the internal pains which *calculi* produce: "*I was pricked in my reins.*" They who have felt them are aware of the torture, and there is no need for a long description. It signifies that his great pain was mingled with indignation, and that this came fresh upon him as often as he looked upon the prosperity of the ungodly.—*Mollerus.*

Verse 21.—"*Reins.*" Before all the other intestines there are the kidneys (כְּלָיוֹת, *νεφροί*), placed on both sides of the lumbar vertebræ on the hinder wall of the abdomen, of which the Scripture makes such frequent mention, and in the most psychically significant manner. It brings the tenderest and the most inward experience of a manifold kind into association with them. When man is suffering most deeply within, *he is pricked in his kidneys* ("*reins*"). When fretting affliction overcomes him, his kidneys are cloven asunder (Job xvi. 13; compare Lam. iii. 13); when he rejoices profoundly, they exult (Prov. xxiii. 16); when he feels himself very penetratingly warned, they chasten him (Psalm xvi. 7); when he very earnestly longs, they are consumed away with his body (Job xix. 27); As the omniscient and all-penetrating knower of the most secret hidden things of man, God is frequently called (from Psalm vii. 10 to the Apocalypse) the Trier of the hearts and reins; and of the ungodly it is said, that God is far from their reins (Jeremiah xii. 2), that is, that he, being withdrawn back into himself, allows not himself to be perceived by them.—*Franz Delitzsch.*

Verse 22.—"*So foolish was I, and ignorant,*" etc. Is not a cavilling spirit at the Lord's dispensations bad, both in its roots and fruits? What are the roots of it but (1) ignorance; (2) pride, this lifteth up (Heb ii. 4); (3) impatiency, or want of waiting on God to see the issues of matters; so in Jonah iv. 8—11; (4) forgetfulness who the Lord is, and who man is that grumbles at his Maker, Lam. iii. 39, Rom. ix. 20. And as for the fruits, they are none of the best, but

bad enough. Men are ready to flag in duty, yea, to throw it off, ver. 13, and Mal. iii. 14; yea, in the way to blaspheme God; see Job ii. 9; Mal. iii. 13; Rev. xvi. 9.—*Thomas Crane, in "A Prospect of Divine Providence."* 1672.

Verse 22.—"*I was as a beast before thee.*" I permitted my mind to be wholly occupied with *sensible things*, like the beasts that perish, and did not look into a future state, nor did I consider nor submit to the wise designs of an unerring providence.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 22.—"*I was as a beast before thee.*" The original has in it no word of comparison; it ought to be rather translated, "*I was a very beast before thee*," and we are told that the Hebrew word being in the plural number, gives it a peculiar emphasis, indicating some monstrous or astonishing beast. It is the word used by Job which is interpreted "behemoth,"—"I was a very monster before thee," not only a beast, but one of the most brutish of all beasts, one of the most stubborn and intractable of all beasts. I think no man can go much lower than this in humble confession. This is a description of human nature, and of the old man in the renewed saint, which is not to be excelled.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 22.—Among the many arguments to prove the penmen of the Scripture inspired by the Spirit of God, this is not the last and least—that the penmen of holy writ do record their own faults and the faults of their dearest and nearest relatives. For instance hereof, how coarsely doth David speak of himself: "*So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.*" And do you think that the face of St. Paul did look the more foul by being drawn with his own pencil, when he says, "I was a murderer, a persecutor, the greatest of sinners," etc.? This is not usual in the writings of human authors, who praise themselves to the utmost of what they could, and rather than lose a drop of applause they will lick it up with their own tongues. Tully writes very copiously in setting forth the good service which he did the Roman state, but not a word of his covetousness, of his affecting popular applause, of his pride and vain glory, of his mean extraction and the like. Whereas, clean contrary, Moses sets down the sin and punishment of his own sister, the idolatry and superstition of Aaron his brother, and his own fault in his preposterous striking the rock, for which he was excluded the land of Canaan.—*Thomas Fuller.*

Verse 23.—"*I am continually with thee*," as a child under the tender care of a parent; and as a parent, during my danger of falling in a slippery path, "*thou hast holden me*, thy child, *by my right hand.*"—*George Horne.*

Verse 23.—"*I am continually with thee.*" He does not say that the Lord is continually with "his people," and holds, and guides, and receives them; he says, "He is continually with *me*; He holds *me*; He will guide *me*; He will receive *me*." The man saw, and felt, and rejoiced in his own personal interest in God's care and love. And he did this (mark), in the very midst of affliction, with "flesh and heart failing;" and in spite too of many wrong, and opposite, and sinful feelings, that had just passed away; under a conviction of his own sinfulness and folly, and, as he calls it, even "brutishness." Oh! it is a blessed thing, brethren, to have a faith like this.—*Charles Bradley.* 1838.

Verse 23.—"*I am still with thee.*" The word translated *still* properly means *always*, and denotes that there had been no change or interruption in the previous relation of the parties. There is a perfectly analogous usage of the French *toujours.*—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 24.—"*Thou shalt guide me.*" How are we to work our way in strange lands, if left entirely to our own resources? Hence it is, that so much is said in the Bible about guides, and that the Lord is called the guide of his people. They are in a foreign land, a land of pits and snares; and, without a good guide, they will be sure to fall into the one, or be caught in the other. "This God is our God, for ever and ever," said the psalmist; and not only so, but he *condescends* to "be our guide, and will be, even unto death" (Psalm xlviii. 14). Can we have a *better* guide? When a guide has been well recommended to us

by those who have tried him, it is our wisdom to place ourselves unreservedly in his hands; and if he say our way lies to the right, it would show our folly to say we were determined to go to the left.—*John Gadsby.*

Verse 24.—"*Guide*" .. "*receive.*" After conversion, God still works with us: he doth not only give grace, but actual help in the work of obedience: "He worketh all our works in us," Isa. xxvi. 12. His actual help is necessary to direct, quicken, strengthen, protect and defend us. In our way to heaven, we need not only a rule and path, but a guide. The rule is the *law* of God; but the guide is the *Spirit* of God.—*Thomas Manton.*

Verse 24.—"*Afterward.*" After all our toil in labour and duty, after all our crosses and afflictions, after all our doubts and fears that we should never receive it; after all the hidings of his face, and clouds and darkness that have passed over us; and after all our battles and fightings for it, oh, then how seasonably will the reception of this reward come in: "*Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.*" O blessed *afterwards;* when all your work is done, when all your doubts and fears are over, and when all your battles are fought; then, Oh then, ye shall receive the reward.—*John Spalding.*

Verse 24.—"*Receive me to glory.*" Mendelssohn in his *Beor*, has perceived the probable allusion in this clause to the translation of Enoch. Of Enoch it is said, (Gen. v. 24.) לָקַח אֹתוֹ אֱלֹהִים, "God *took* him." Here (Psalm lxxiii. 24), the psalmist writes, כָּבוֹד תִּקָּחֵנִי. "Thou shalt *take* me to glory, or gloriously." In another (Psalm xlix. 16) we read, כִּי יִקָּחֵנִי. "For he (God) shall *take* me." I can hardly think that the two latter expressions were written and read in their context by Jews without reference to the former.—*Thomas Thomason Perowne.*

Verse 25.—"*Whom have I in heaven but thee,*" etc. How small is the number of those who keep their affections fixed on God alone! We see how superstition joins to him many others as rivals for our affections. While the Papists admit in word that all things depend upon God, they are, nevertheless, constantly seeking to obtain help from this and the other quarter independent of him.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 25.—It pleased David, and it pleases all the saints, more that God is their salvation, whether temporal or eternal, than that he saves them. The saints look more at God than at all that is God's. They say, *Non tua, sed te; we desire not thine, but thee*, or nothing of thine like thee. "*Whom have I in heaven but thee?*" saith David. What are saints? what are angels, to a soul without God? 'Tis true of things as well as of persons. What have we in heaven but God? What's joy without God? What's glory without God? What's all the furniture and riches, all the delicacies, yea, and all the diadems of heaven, without the God of heaven? If God should say to the saints, Here is heaven, take it amongst you, but I will withdraw myself, how would they weep over heaven itself, and make it a *Baca*, a valley of tears indeed. Heaven is not heaven unless we enjoy God. 'Tis the presence of God which makes heaven: glory is but our nearest being unto God. As Mephibosheth replied, when David told him, "I have said, thou and Ziba divide the land:" "Let him take all, if he will," saith Mephibosheth, I do not so much regard the land as I regard thy presence; "Let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace to his own house," where I may enjoy him. So if God should say to the saints, Take heaven amongst you, and withdraw himself, they would even say, Nay, let the world take heaven, if they will, if we may not have thee in heaven, heaven will be but an earth, or rather but a hell to us. That which saints rejoice in, is that they may be in the presence of God, that they may sit at his table, and eat bread with him; that is, that they may be near him continually, which was Mephibosheth's privilege with David. That's the thing which they desire and which their souls thirst after; that's the wine they would drink. "My soul," saith David (Psalm xlii. 2), "thirsteth for God, for the living God; when" (methinks the time is very long, when) "shall I come and appear before God?"—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verses 25, 26.—Gotthold was invited to an entertainment, and had the hope held out that he would meet with a friend whom he loved, and in whose society he took the greatest delight. On joining the party, however, he learned that, owing to some unforeseen occurrence, this friend was not to be present, and felt too much chagrined to take any share in the hilarity. The circumstance afterwards led him into the following train of thought: The pious soul, that sincerely loves and fervently longs for the Lord Jesus, experiences what I lately did. She seeks her Beloved in all places, objects, and events. If she find him, who is happier? If she find him not, who more disconsolate? Ah! Lord Jesus, thou best of friends, thou art the object of my love; my soul seeketh thee, my heart longeth after thee. What care I for the world, with all its pleasures and pomps, its power and glory, unless I find thee in it? What care I for the daintiest food, the sweetest drinks, and the merriest company, unless thou art present, and unless I can dip my morsel in thy wounds, sweeten my draught with thy grace, and hear thy pleasant words. Verily, my Saviour, were I even in heaven, and did not find thee there, it would seem to me no heaven at all. Wherefore, Lord Jesus, when with tears, sighs, yearnings of heart, and patient hope, I seek thee, hide not thyself from me, but suffer me to find thee; for, "Lord! whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."—*Christian Scriver.*

Verse 26.—"*My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*" In which words we may take notice of five things. I. The order inverted. When he mentions his malady he begins with the failing of the flesh, and then of the heart; but when he reports the relief he begins with that of the heart. From hence observe *that when God works a cure in man (out of love) he begins with the heart—he cures that first.* And there may be these reasons for it. 1. Because the sin of the heart is often the procuring cause of the malady of body and soul. 2. The body ever fares the better for the soul, but not the soul for the body. 3. The cure of the soul is the principal cure. II. The suitableness of the remedy to the malady. Strength of heart for failing of heart, and a blessed portion for the failing of the flesh. Observe, *that there is a proportionate remedy and relief in God for all maladies and afflictions whatsoever, both within and without. If your hearts fail you, God is strength; if your flesh fails you, or comforts fail you, God is a portion.* III. The prophet's interest; he calls God his portion. Observe, *that true Israelites have an undoubted interest in God:—He is theirs.* IV. The prophet's experience in the worst time. He finds this to be true, that when communicated strength fails, there is a never-failing strength in God. Observe, *that Christians' experiences of God's all-sufficiency are then fullest and highest when created comforts fail them.* V. There is the prophet's improvement of his experience for support and comfort against future trials and temptations. Observe, *that a saint's consideration of his experience of God's all-sufficiency in times of exigency, is enough to bear up and to fortify his spirit against all trials and temptations for the time to come.* Thus you may improve the text by way of observation; but there are two principal doctrines to be insisted on. First, that God is the rock of a saint's heart, his strength, and his portion for ever. Secondly, that divine influence and relief passeth from God to his people when they stand in most need thereof. 1st. God is the rock of a saint's heart, strength, and portion for ever. Here are two members or branches in this doctrine. 1. That God is the rock of a saint's heart, strength. 2. That God is the portion of a saint. Branch 1. God is the rock of a saint's heart, strength. He is not only strength, and the strength of their hearts, but the rock of their strength; so Isaiah xvii. 10. Psalm lxii. 7, צור, the same word that is used in the text, from hence comes our English word "*sure.*" Explication. God is the rock of our strength, both in respect of our naturals and also of our spirituals: he is the strength of nature and of grace (Psalm xxvii. 1); the strength of my life

natural and spiritual. God is the strength of thy natural faculties —of reason and understanding, of wisdom and prudence, of will and affections. He is the strength of all thy graces, faith, patience, meekness, temperance, hope, and charity; both as to their being and exercise. He is the strength of all thy comfort and courage, peace and happiness, salvation and glory. Psalm clx. 7. "O God, the rock of my salvation." In three respects. 1st. He is the author and giver of all strength. Psalm xviii. 32: "It is God that girdeth me with strength." Psalm xxiv. 11: "He will give strength to his people." Psalm cxxxviii. 3; Psalm lxviii. 35. 2ndly. He is the increaser and perfecter of a saint's strength; it is God that makes a saint strong and mighty both to do and suffer, to bear and forbear, to believe and to hope to the end; so Hebrews xi. 34: "*Out of weakness they were made strong;*" so 1 John ii. 14. And therefore is that prayer of Peter, 1 Peter v. 10. 3rdly. He is the preserver of your strength; your life is laid up in God. Col. iii. 3. Your strength is kept by the strength of God; so Psalm xci. 1. God doth overshadow the strength of saints, that no breach can be made upon it. Psalm lxiii. 7. "*In the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.*"—*Samuel Blackerby.* 1673.

Verse 26.—Oh, strange logic! Grace hath learned to deduce strong conclusions out of weak premises, and happy out of sad. If the *major* be, "*My flesh and my heart faileth;*" and the *minor*, "There is no blossom in the fig-tree, nor fruit in the vine," etc.; yet his *conclusion* is firm and undeniable: "*The Lord is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever;*" or, "Yet will I rejoice in the God of my salvation." And if there be more in the *conclusion* than in the *premises*, it is the better; God comes even in the conclusion.—*John Sheffield, in "The Rising Sun."* 1654.

Verse 26.—"*My flesh and my heart faileth.*" They who take the expression in a bad sense, take it to be a confession of his former sin, and to have relation to the combat mentioned in the beginning of the Psalm, between the flesh and the spirit; as if he said, I was so surfeited with self-conceitedness that I presumed to arraign divine actions at the bar of human reason, and to judge the stick under water crooked by the eye of my sense, when, indeed, it was straight; but now I see that flesh is no fit judge in matters of faith; that neither my flesh nor heart can determine rightly of God's dispensations, nor hold out uprightly under Satan's temptations; for if God had not supported me my flesh had utterly supplanted me: "*My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart.*" Flesh is sometimes taken for corrupt nature. Gal. v. 13. First, because it is propagated by the flesh (John iii. 6); secondly, because it is executed by the flesh (Rom. vii. 25); thirdly, because corruption is nourished, strengthened, and increased by the flesh. 1 John ii. 16. They who take the words in a good sense, do not make them look back so far as to the beginning of the Psalm, but only to the neighbour verse.—*George Swinnock.*

Verse 26.—"*God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*" The Hebrew carrieth it, but God is the *rock of my heart, i.e.*, a sure, strong, and immoveable foundation to build upon. Though the winds may blow, and the waves beat, when the storm of death cometh, yet I need not fear that the house of my heart will fall, for it is built on a sure foundation: God is the rock of my heart. The strongest child that God hath is not able to stand alone; like the hop or ivy, he must have somewhat to support him, or he is presently on the ground. Of all seasons, the Christian hath most need of succour at his dying hour; then he must take his leave of all his comforts on earth, and then he shall be sure of the sharpest conflicts from hell, and, therefore, it is impossible he should hold out without extraordinary help from heaven. But the psalmist had armour of proof ready, wherewith to encounter his last enemy. As weak and fearful a child as he was, he durst venture a walk in the dark entry of death, having his Father by the hand: "*Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me,*" Psalm xxiii. Though at the troubles of my life, and my trial at death, my heart is ready to fail me, yet I have a strong

cordial which will cheer me in my saddest condition· "*God is the strength of my heart.*"

"*And my portion.*" It is a metaphor taken from the ancient custom among the Jews, of dividing inheritances, whereby every one had his allotted portion; as if he had said, God is not only my rock to defend me from those tempests which assault me, and, thereby, my freedom from evil; but he is also my portion, to supply my necessities, and to give me the fruition of all good. Others, indeed, have their parts on this side the land of promise, but the author of all portions is the matter of my portion. My portion doth not lie in the rubbish and lumber, as theirs doth whose portion is in this life, be they never so large; but my portion containeth him whom the heavens, and heaven of heavens, can never contain. God is the strength of my heart, and my portion "*for ever;*" not for a year, or an age, or a million of ages, but for eternity. Though others' portions, like roses, the fuller they blow, the sooner they shed; they are worsted often by their pride, and wasted through their prodigality, so that at last they come to want—and surely death always rends their persons and portions asunder; yet my portion will be ever full, without diminution. Without alteration, this God will be my God for ever and ever, my guide and aid unto death; nay, death, which dissolveth so many bonds, and untieth such close knots, shall never part me and my portion, but give me a perfect and everlasting possession of it.—*George Swinnock.*

Verse 28.—"*It is good for me to draw near to God.*" When he saith '*tis good*, his meaning is '*tis best.* This positive is superlative. It is more than good for us to draw nigh to God at all times, it is best for us to do so, and it is at our utmost peril not to do so; "For, lo," saith the psalmist (verse 27), "they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee." It is dangerous to be far from God, but it is more dangerous to go far from him. Every man is far off by nature, and wicked men go further off: the former *shall perish*, the latter *shall be destroyed.* He that fares best in his withdrawings from God, fares bad enough; therefore, it is best for us to draw nigh unto God. He is the best friend at all times, and the only friend at sometimes. And may we not say that God suffers and orders evil times, and the withdrawings of the creature, for that very end, that we might draw nearer unto him? Doth he not give up the world to a spirit of reviling and mocking that he may stir up in his people a spirit of prayer?—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 28.—"*It is good;*" that is, it puts in us a blessed quality and disposition. It makes a man to be like God himself; and, secondly, "*it is good,*" that is, it is comfortable; for it is the happiness of the creature to be near the Creator; it is beneficial and helpful. "*To draw near.*" How can a man but be near to God, seeing he filleth heaven and earth: "Whither shall I go from thy presence?" Psalm cxxxix. 7. He is present always in power and providence in all places, but graciously present with some by his Spirit, supporting, comforting, strengthening the heart of a good man. As the soul is said to be *tota in toto*, in several parts by several faculties, so God, is present to all, but in a diverse manner. Now we are said to be near to God in divers degrees: *first*, when our *understanding is enlightened; intellectus est veritatis sponsa;* and so the young man speaking discreetly in things concerning God, is said not to be far from the kingdom of God, Mark xii. 34. *Secondly, in minding:* when God is present to our minds, so that the soul is said to be present to that which it mindeth; contrarily it is said of the wicked, that "God is not in all their thoughts," Psalm x. 4. *Thirdly*, when *the will upon the discovery of the understanding comes to choose the better part, and is drawn from that choice to cleave to him*, as it was said of Jonathan's heart, "it was knit to David," 1 Sam. xviii. 1. *Fourthly*, when *our whole affections are carried to God*, loving him as the chief good. Love is the first-born affection. That breeds desire of communion with God. Thence comes joy in him, so that the soul pants after

God, "as the hart after the water springs," Psalm xli. 1. *Fifthly*, and especially, *when the soul is touched with the Spirit of God working faith*, stirring up dependence, confidence, and trust on God. Hence ariseth sweet communion. The soul is never at rest till it rests on him. Then it is afraid to break with him or to displease him; but it groweth zealous and resolute, and hot in love, stiff in good cases; resolute against his enemies. And yet this is not all, for God will have also the outward man, so as the whole man must present itself before God in word, in sacraments; speak of him and to him with reverence, and yet with strength of affection mounting up in prayer, as in a fiery chariot; hear him speak to us; consulting with his oracles; fetching comforts against distresses, directions against maladies. *Sixthly*, and especially, we draw near to him *when we praise him;* for this is the work of the souls departed, and of the angels in heaven, that are continually near unto him. The prophet here saith, "*It is good for me.*" How came he to know this? Why, he had found it by experience, and by it he was thoroughly convinced.—*Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 28.—"*To draw near to God.*" It is not one isolated act. It is not merely turning to God, and saying, "I have come to him." The expression is "*draw.*" It is not a single act; it is the drawing, the coming, the habitual walk, going on, and on, and on, so long as we are on earth. It is, therefore, an habitual religion which must be pressed and enforced upon us.—*Montagu Villiers.* 1855.

Verse 28.—"*To draw near to God.*" To draw near to God, I. A man should make his peace with God, in and through the Mediator Jesus Christ; for, until once that be done, a man must be said to be far from God, and there is a partition-wall standing betwixt God and him. It is the same with that advice given by Eliphaz to Job: "*Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee,*" Job xxii. 21. Be friends with God, and all shall be well with you. II. It is to seek more after communion and fellowship with God, and to pursue after intimacy and familiarity with him; and to have more of his blessed company with us in our ordinary walk and conversation; according to that word, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance," Psalm lxxxix. 15. III. As it stands here in the text, it is the expression of one who hath made up his peace already, and is on good terms with God; and doth differ a little from what the words absolutely imply; and so we may take it thus, I. It implies the confirming or making sure our interest in God, and so it supposeth the man's peace to be made with God; for, whoever be the author of this Psalm, it supposeth he has made his peace; and, therefore, in the following words it is subjoined, "*I have put my trust in the Lord,*" etc.; that is, I have trusted my soul unto God, and made my peace with him through a mediator. It is "*good,*" whatever comes, it is always "*good*" to be "*near to God,*" that way, and to be made sure in him. II. It implies to be more conformed unto the image of God, and, therefore, this nearness to him is opposed to that of being far from God. It is good, says he, to draw near to God in my duty; when so many are far from him. III. It implies, to lay by all things in the world, and to seek fellowship and communion with God, and to be more set apart for his blessed company, and to walk with him in a dependence upon him as the great burden-bearer, as he who is to be all in all unto us. In a word, to draw near unto God, is to make our peace with him, and to secure and confirm that peace with him, and to study a conformity unto him, and to be near unto him in our walk and conversation; in our fellowship, and whole carriage, and deportment, to be always near unto him.—*William Guthrie.*

Verse 28.—The Epicurean, says Augustine, is wont to say, *It is good for me to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh:* The Stoic is wont to say, *For me it is good to enjoy the pleasures of the mind:* The Apostle used to say (not in words, but in sense), *It is good for me to cleave to God.—Lorinus.*

Verse 28.—"*The Lord God.*" The names "*The Lord Jehovah*" are a combination expressive of God's sovereignty, self-existence, and covenant relation to his people.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Whole Psalm. It containeth the godly man's *trial*, in the former part of it, and his *triumph*, in the latter part of it. We have, I. The grievous conflict between the flesh and the spirit, to the 15th verse. II. The glorious conquest of the spirit over the flesh, to the end.—*G. Swinnock.*

Whole Psalm. I. The cause of his distemper. II. The cure of it. III. The psalmist's carriage after it.—*G. Swinnock.*

Verse 1.—The true Israel, the great blessing, and the sureness of it: or, the proposition of the text expounded, enforced, and applied.

Verse 1 (*first clause*).—Israel's receipts from God are, I. For quantity, the greatest; II. For variety, the choicest; III. For quality, the sweetest; IV. For security, the surest; V. For duration, the most lasting.—*Simeon Ash.*

Verse 2.—I. How far a believer may fall. II. How far he shall not fall. III. What fears are and what are not allowable.

Verse 2.—A retrospect of our slips; prospect of future danger; present preparation for it.

Verse 4.—Quiet deaths: the cases of the godly and ungodly distinguished by the causes of the quiet, and the unreliableness of mere feelings shown.

Verse 5.—The bastard's portion contrasted with that of the true son.

Verse 7.—The dangers of opulence and luxury.

Verse 8.—Connection between a corrupt heart and a proud tongue.

Verse 10.—I. The believer's cup is bitter. II. It is full. III. Its contents are varied "waters." IV. It is but a "cup," measured and limited. V. It is the cup of "his people," and, consequently, works good in the highest degree.

Verse 11.—The atheist's open question; the oppressor's practical question; the careless man's secret question; and the fearful saint's fainting question. The reasons why it is ever asked, and the conclusive reasons which put the matter beyond question.

Verse 12.—This verse suggests solemn enquiries for persons who are growing rich.

Verse 14.—The frequent and even constant chastisements of the righteous; the necessity and design thereof; and the consolations connected therewith.

Verse 15.—How we may bring injury on the saints; why we should avoid so doing, and how.

Verse 17.—I. Entrance into the place of fellowship with God, its privileges, and the way thereto. II. Lessons learned in that hallowed place: the text mentions one. III. Practical influence of the fellowship, and the instruction.

Verses 17, 18.—The sinner's end; See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 486.

Verse 18.—"*Thou didst set them in slippery places.*" I. It implies that they were always exposed to *sudden, unexpected destruction.* As he that walks in slippery places is every moment liable to fall, he cannot foresee one moment whether he shall stand or fall the next; and when he does fall, he falls at once without warning. II. They are liable to fall *of* themselves, without being thrown down by the hand of another; as he that stands or walks on slippery ground needs nothing but his own weight to throw him down. III. There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell but the mere pleasure of God.—*Jonathan Edwards.*

Verse 19.—The first sight and sense of hell by a proud and wealthy sinner, who has just died in peace.

Verses 18—20.—The end of the wicked is, I. Near: "Thou hast set," etc. It may happen at any time. II. Judicial: "Thou bringest," etc. III. Sudden: "How are they," etc. IV. Tormenting: "They are utterly consumed," etc. V. Eternal: Left to themselves; gone from the mind of God; and disregarded as a dream when one awaketh. No after act respecting them, either for deliverance or annihilation.—*G. R.*

Verse 20.—The contemptible object:—a self-righteous, or boastful, or persecuting, or cavilling, or wealthy sinner when his soul is called before God

Verse 22.—Our folly, ignorance, and brutishness. When displayed. What effect the fact should have upon us; and how greatly it illustrates divine grace.

Verse 23.—I. God does not forsake his people when they forsake him: "Nevertheless I am continually," etc. II. God does not lose his hold on them when they lose their hold on him: "Nevertheless thou hast holden," etc.—*G. R.*

Verses 22—25.—I. The psalmist's confession concerning the flesh. II. The faithful expressions of the spirit. III. The conclusion of the whole matter. See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 467.

Verses 23, 24.—I. What he says of the present: "I am continually with thee." II. What he says of the past: "Thou hast holden me," etc. III. What he says of the future: "Thou shalt guide," etc.—*W. Jay.*

Verses 23, 24.—Communion, upholding, on-leading, reception to glory, four glorious privileges; especially as bestowed on one who was grieved, foolish, ignorant, and a beast. Note the contrasts.

Verse 24.—The Enoch walk, and the Enoch reception into glory.

Verse 25.—God the best portion of the Christian.—*Jonathan Edwards' Works, Vol. II. pp.* 104—7.

Verse 25.—Heaven and earth ransacked to find a joy equal to the Lord himself. Let the preacher take up various joys and show the inferiority.

Verse 26.—I. The psalmist's complaint: "My flesh and my heart faileth." II. His comfort: "But God," etc. Or, we may take notice, I. Of the frailty of his flesh. II. Of the flourishing of his faith. Doctrine 1. That man's flesh will fail him. The highest, the holiest man's heart will not always hold out. The prophet was great and gracious, yet his flesh failed him. Doctrine 2. That it is the comfort of a Christian, in his saddest condition, that God is his portion. —*G. Swinnock.*

Verse 26.—"The Fading of the Flesh."—*Swinnock's Treatise.* [*Nichol's Puritan Series.*]

Verse 26.—Where we fail and where we cannot fail.

Verse 27.—I. The sad conditions. II. The terrible punishments. III. The implied consolations.

Verse 28.—To draw near to God is our wisdom, our honour, our safety, our peace, our riches.—*Thomas Watson's Sermon,* "*The Happiness of Drawing near to God.*" 1669. See also, "*The Saint's Happiness,*" *R. Sibbes's Sermon.*

Verse 28.—David's conclusion; or, the saint's resolution.—*R. Sibbes.*

Verse 28.—I. The language of prayer: "It is good," etc. II. Of faith: "I have put," etc. III. Of praise: "That I may declare."—*G. R.*

Verse 28.—See "Spurgeon's Sermons," Nos. 287–8, "Let us pray." No. 879, "An assuredly good thing."

WORKS UPON THE SEVENTY-THIRD PSALM.

Certain Comfortable Expositions of the Constant Martyr of Christ JOHN HOOPER, Bishop of Gloucester and Worcester, 1555, written in the time of his Tribulation and Imprisonment, upon the Twenty-third, Sixty-second, Seventy-third, and Seventy-seventh Psalm of the prophet David. [In Parker Society's publications, and also in the "British Reformers" series of the Religious Tract Society.]

David Restored; or, An Antidote against the Prosperity of the Wicked and the Afflictions of the Just, shewing the different ends of both. In a most seasonable discourse upon the Seventy-third Psalm. By the Right Reverend Father in God EDWARD PARRY. Late Lord Bishop of Killaloe. 1660.

PSALM LXXIV.

TITLE.—Maschil of Asaph. *An instructive Psalm by Asaph. The history of the suffering church is always edifying; when we see how the faithful trusted and wrestled with their God in times of dire distress, we are thereby taught how to behave ourselves under similar circumstances: we learn moreover, that when the fiery trial befalls us, no strange thing has happened unto us, we are following the trail of the host of God.*

DIVISION.—*From verse* 1—11 *the poet pleads the sorrows of the nation, and the despite done to the assemblies of the Lord; then he urges former displays of divine power as a reason for present deliverance (verses* 12—23*). Whether it is a prophetic Psalm, intended for use in troubles foreseen, or whether it was written by a later Asaph, after the invasion by Sennacherib or during the Maccabean wars, it would be very hard to determine, but we see no difficulty in the first supposition.*

EXPOSITION.

O GOD, why hast thou cast *us* off for ever? *why* doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?

2 Remember thy congregation, *which* thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, *which* thou hast redeemed; this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.

3 Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations; *even* all *that* the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary.

4 Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations; they set up their ensigns *for* signs.

5 *A man* was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees.

6 But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers.

7 They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled *by casting down* the dwelling place of thy name to the ground.

8 They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.

9 We see not our signs: *there is* no more any prophet: neither *is there* among us any that knoweth how long.

10 O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?

11 Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? pluck *it* out of thy bosom.

1. "*O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever?*" To cast us off at all were hard, but when thou dost for so long a time desert thy people it is an evil beyond all endurance—the very chief of woes and abyss of misery. It is our wisdom when under chastisement to enquire, "Show me wherefore thou contendest with me?" and if the affliction be a protracted one, we should the more eagerly enquire the purport of it. Sin is usually at the bottom of all the hidings of the Lord's face; let us ask the Lord to reveal the special form of it to us, that we may repent of it, overcome it, and henceforth forsake it. When a church is in a forsaken condition it must not sit still in apathy, but turn to the hand which

smiteth it, and humbly enquire the reason why. At the same time, the enquiry of the text is a faulty one, for it implies two mistakes. There are two questions, which only admit of negative replies. "Hath God cast away his people?" (Romans xi. 1); and the other, "Will the Lord cast off for ever?" (Psalm lxxvii. 7). God is never weary of his people so as to abhor them, and even when his anger is turned against them, it is but for a small moment, and with a view to their eternal good. Grief in its distraction asks strange questions and surmises impossible terrors. It is a wonder of grace that the Lord has not long ago put us away as men lay aside cast-off garments, but he hateth putting away, and will still be patient with his chosen. "*Why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?*" They are thine, they are the objects of thy care, they are poor, silly, and defenceless things: pity them, forgive them, and come to their rescue. They are but sheep, do not continue to be wroth with them. It is a terrible thing when the anger of God smokes, but it is an infinite mercy that it does not break into a devouring flame. It is meet to pray the Lord to remove every sign of his wrath, for it is to those who are truly the Lord's sheep a most painful thing to be the objects of his displeasure. To vex the Holy Spirit is no mean sin, and yet how frequently are we guilty of it; hence it is no marvel that we are often under a cloud.

2. "*Remember thy congregation, which thou hast purchased of old.*" What a mighty plea is redemption. O God, canst thou see the bloodmark on thine own sheep, and yet allow grievous wolves to devour them? The church is no new purchase of the Lord; from before the world's foundation the chosen were regarded as redeemed by the Lamb slain: shall ancient love die out, and the eternal purpose become frustrate? The Lord would have his people remember the Paschal Lamb, the bloodstained lintel, and the overthrow of Egypt; and will he forget all this himself? Let us put him in remembrance, let us plead together. Can he desert his blood-bought and forsake his redeemed? Can election fail and eternal love cease to flow? Impossible. The woes of Calvary, and the covenant of which they are the seal, are the security of the saints.

"*The rod of thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed.*" So sweet a plea deserved to be repeated and enlarged upon. The Lord's portion is his people —will he lose his inheritance? His church is his kingdom, over which he stretches the rod of sovereignty; will he allow his possessions to be torn from him? God's property in us is a fact full of comfort: his value of us, his dominion over us, his connection with us are all so many lights to cheer our darkness. No man will willingly lose his inheritance, and no prince will relinquish his dominions; therefore we believe that the King of kings will hold his own, and maintain his rights against all comers. "*This mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.*" The Lord's having made Zion the especial centre of his worship, and place of his manifestation, is yet another plea for the preservation of Jerusalem. Shall the sacred temple of Jehovah be desecrated by heathen, and the throne of the Great King be defiled by his enemies? Has the Spirit of God dwelt in our hearts, and will he leave them to become a haunt for the devil? Has he sanctified us by his indwelling, and will he, after all, vacate the throne? God forbid.

It may be well to note that this Psalm was evidently written with a view to the temple upon Zion, and not to the tabernacle which was there in David's time, and was a mere tent; but the destructions here bewailed were exercised upon the carved work of a substantial structure. Those who had seen the glory of God in Solomon's peerless temple might well mourn in bitterness, when the Lord allowed his enemies to make an utter ruin of that matchless edifice.

3. "*Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations.*" The ruin made had already long been an eyesore to the suppliant, and there seemed no hope of restoration. Havoc lorded it not only for a day or a year, but with perpetual power. This is another argument with God. Would Jehovah sit still and see his own land made a wilderness, his own palace a desolation? Until he should

arise, and draw near, the desolation would remain; only his presence could cure the evil, therefore is he entreated to hasten with uplifted feet for the deliverance of his people. "*Even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary.*" Every stone in the ruined temple appealed to the Lord; on all sides were the marks of impious spoilers, the holiest places bore evidence of their malicious wickedness; would the Lord for ever permit this? Would he not hasten to overthrow the foe who defied him to his face, and profaned the throne of his glory? Faith finds pleas in the worst circumstances, she uses even the fallen stones of her desolate palaces, and assails with them the gates of heaven, casting them forth with the great engine of prayer.

4. "*Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations.*" Where thy people sang like angels, these barbarians roar like beasts. When thy saints come together for worship, these cruel men attack them with all the fury of lions. They have no respect for the most solemn gatherings, but intrude themselves and their blasphemies into our most hallowed meetings. How often in times of persecution or prevalent heresy has the church learned the meaning of such language. May the Lord spare us such misery. When hypocrites abound in the church, and pollute her worship, the case is parallel to that before us; Lord save us from so severe a trial. "*They set up their ensigns for signs.*" Idolatrous emblems used in war were set up over God's altar, as an insulting token of victory, and of contempt for the vanquished and their God. Papists, Arians, and the modern school of Neologians have, in their day, set up their ensigns for signs. Superstition, unbelief, and carnal wisdom have endeavoured to usurp the place of Christ crucified, to the grief of the church of God. The enemies without do us small damage, but those within the church cause her serious harm; by supplanting the truth and placing error in its stead, they deceive the people, and lead multitudes to destruction. As a Jew felt a holy horror when he saw an idolatrous emblem set up in the holy place, even so do we when in a Protestant church we see the fooleries of Rome, and when from pulpits, once occupied by men of God, we hear philosophy and vain deceit.

5. "*A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees.*" Once men were renowned for felling the cedars and preparing them for building the temple, but now the axe finds other work, and men are as proud of destroying as their fathers were of erecting. Thus in the olden times our sires dealt sturdy blows against the forests of error, and laboured hard to lay the axe at the root of the trees; but, alas! their sons appear to be quite as diligent to destroy the truth and to overthrow all that their fathers built up. O for the good old times again! O for an hour of Luther's hatchet, or Calvin's mighty axe!

6. "*But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers.*" The invaders were as industrious to destroy as the ancient builders had been to construct. Such fair carving it was barbarous to hew in pieces, but the Vandals had no mercy and broke down all, with any weapon which came to hand. In these days men are using axes and sledge-hammers against the gospel and the church. Glorious truths, far more exquisite than the goodliest carving, are cavilled over and smashed by the blows of modern criticism. Truths which have upheld the afflicted and cheered the dying are smitten by pretentious Goths, who would be accounted learned, but know not the first principles of the truth. With sharp ridicule, and heavy blows of sophistry, they break the faith of some; and would, if it were possible, destroy the confidence of the elect themselves. Assyrians, Babylonians, and Romans are but types of spiritual foes who labour to crush the truth and the people of God.

7. "*They have cast fire into thy sanctuary.*" Axes and hammers were not sufficient for the purpose of the destroyers, they must needs try fire. Malice knows no bounds. Those who hate God are never sparing of the most cruel weapons. To this day the enmity of the human heart is quite as great as ever; and, if providence did not restrain, the saints would still be as fuel for the flames.

"*They have defiled by casting down the dwelling place of thy name to the ground.*" They made a heap of the temple, and left not one stone upon another. When the Lord left Mount Zion, and the Roman gained entrance, the military fury led the soldiery to burn out and root up the memorial of the famous House of the Lord. Could the powers of darkness have their way, a like fate would befall the church of Christ. "Rase it," say they, "rase it even to the foundation thereof." Defilement to the church is destruction; her foes would defile her till nothing of her purity, and consequently of her real self, remained. Yet, even if they could wreak their will upon the cause of Christ, they are not able to destroy it, it would survive their blows and fires; the Lord would hold them still like dogs in a leash, and in the end frustrate all their designs.

8. "*They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together.*" It was no idle wish, their cruelty was sincere, deep-seated, a matter of their inmost heart. Extirpation was the desire of Haman, and the aim of many another tyrant; not a remnant of the people of God would have been left if oppressors could have had their way. Pharaoh's policy to stamp out the nation has been a precedent for others, yet the Jews survive, and will; the bush though burning has not been consumed. Even thus the church of Christ has gone through baptisms of blood and fire, but it is all the brighter for them. "*They have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.*" Here is no allusion to places called synagogues, but to assemblies; and as no assemblies for worship were held but in one place, the ruin of the temple was the destruction of all the holy gatherings, and so in effect all the meeting-places were destroyed. One object of persecutors has always been to put an end to all conventicles, as they have called them. Keep them from meeting and you will scatter them, so have the foemen said; but, glory be to God, saints are independent of walls, and have met on the hill side, by the moss, or in the catacombs, or in a boat at sea. Yet has the attempt been almost successful, and the hunt so hot, that the faithful have wandered in solitude, and their solemn congregations have been, under such circumstances, few and far between. What sighs and cries have in such times gone up to the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth. How happy are we that we can meet for worship in any place we choose, and none dare molest us.

9. "*We see not our signs.*" Alas, poor Israel! No Urim and Thummim blazed on the High Priest's bosom, and no Shekinah shone from between the cherubim. The smoke of sacrifice and cloud of incense no more arose from the holy hill; solemn feasts were suspended, and even circumcision, the covenant sign, was forbidden by the tyrant We, too, as believers, know what it is to lose our evidences and grope in darkness; and too often do our churches also miss the tokens of the Redeemer's presence, and their lamps remain untrimmed. Sad plaint of a people under a cloud! "*There is no more any prophet.*" Prophecy was suspended. No inspiring psalm or consoling promise fell from bard or seer. It is ill with the people of God when the voice of the preacher of the gospel fails, and a famine of the word of life falls on the people. God-sent ministers are as needful to the saints as their daily bread, and it is a great sorrow when a congregation is destitute of a faithful pastor. It is to be feared, that with all the ministers now existing, there is yet a dearth of men whose hearts and tongues are touched with the celestial fire. "*Neither is there any among us that knoweth how long.*" If some one could foretel an end, the evil might be borne with a degree of patience, but when none can see a termination, or foretel an escape, the misery has a hopeless appearance, and is overwhelming. Blessed be God, he has not left his church in these days to be so deplorably destitute of cheering words; let us pray that he never may. Contempt of the word is very common, and may well provoke the Lord to withdraw it from us; may his long-suffering endure the strain, and his mercy afford us still the word of life.

10. "*O God, how long shall the adversary reproach?*" Though we know not how long yet thou dost. The times and seasons are with thee. When God is reproached, there is hope for us, for it may be he will hearken and avenge

his dishonoured name. Wickedness has great license allowed it, and justice lingers on the road; God has his reasons for delay, and his seasons for action, and in the end it shall be seen that he is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness. "*Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?*" He will do so for ever, unless thou dost give him his quietus. Wilt thou never defend thyself, and stop slanderous tongues? Wilt thou always endure the jeers of the profane? Is there to be no end to all this sacrilege and cursing? Yes, it shall all be ended, but not by-and-by. There is a time for the sinner to rage, and a time in which patience bears with him; yet it is but a time, and then, ah, then!

11. "*Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand?*" Wherefore this inaction, this indifference for thine own honour and thy people's safety? How bold is the suppliant! Does he err? Nay, verily, we who are so chill, and distant, and listless in prayer are the erring ones. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and he who learns the art shall surely prevail with God by its means. It is fit that we should enquire why the work of grace goes on so slowly, and the enemy has so much power over men: the enquiry may suggest practical reflections of unbounded value.

"Why dost thou from the conflict stay?
Why do thy chariot wheels delay?
Lift up thyself, hell's kingdom shake,
Arm of the Lord, awake, awake."

"*Pluck it out of thy bosom.*" A bold simile, but dying men must venture for their lives. When God seems to fold his arms we must not fold ours, but rather renew our entreaties that he would again put his hand to the work. O for more agony in prayer among professing Christians, then should we see miracles of grace. We have here before us a model of pleading, a very rapture of prayer. It is humble, but very bold, eager, fervent, and effectual. The heart of God is always moved by such entreaties. When we bring forth our strong reasons, then will he bring forth his choice mercies.

12 For God *is* my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.

13 Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.

14 Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, *and* gavest him *to be* meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.

15 Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood: thou driedst up mighty rivers.

16 The day *is* thine, the night also *is* thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun.

17 Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter.

18 Remember this, *that* the enemy hath reproached, O LORD, and *that* the foolish people have blasphemed thy name.

19 O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude *of the wicked:* forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever.

20 Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.

21 O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name.

22 Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily.

23 Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually

Having spread the sad case before the Lord, the pleader now urges another series of arguments for divine help. He reasons from the Lord's former wonders of grace, and his deeds of power, imploring a repetition of the same divine works.

12. "*For God is my King of old.*" How consoling is this avowal! Israel in holy loyalty acknowledges her King, and claims to have been his possession from of old, and thence she derives a plea for defence and deliverance. If the Lord be indeed the sole monarch of our bosoms, he will in his love put forth his strength on our behalf; if from eternity he has claimed us as his own, he will preserve us from the insulting foe. "*Working salvation in the midst of the earth.*" From the most remote period of Israel's history the Lord had worked out for her many salvations; especially at the Red Sea, the very heart of the world was astonished by his wonders of deliverance. Now, every believer may plead at this day the ancient deeds of the Lord, the work of Calvary, the overthrow of sin, death, and hell. He who wrought out our salvation of old will not, cannot desert us now. Each past miracle of grace assures us that he who has begun to deliver will continue to redeem us from all evil. His deeds of old were public and wrought in the teeth of his foes, they were no delusions or make-believes; and, therefore, in all our perils we look for true and manifest assistance, and we shall surely receive it.

13. "*Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength.*" Infinite power split the Red Sea in twain. Israel delighted to rehearse this famous act of the Lord. "*Thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.*" Monsters long accustomed to the deep found themselves left high and dry. Huge things of the sea-cave and the coral grot were deprived of their vital element, and left with crushed heads upon the dry channel bed. There, too, that old dragon Pharaoh was utterly broken, and Egypt herself had the head of her power and pomp broken with an almighty blow. Even thus is that old dragon broken by him who came to bruise the serpent's head, and the sea of wrath no longer rolls before us; we pass through it dry-shod. Our faith as to the present is revived by glad memories of the past.

14. "*Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces.*" It is the Lord who has done it all. The mighty dragon of Egypt was utterly slain, and his proud heads broken in pieces. Our Lord Jesus is the true Hercules, dragons with a hundred heads are crushed beneath his foot: the infernal hydra he utterly vanquishes. "*And gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.*" Not only did the wild beasts feed upon the carcasses of the Egyptians, but the dwellers along the shores stripped the bodies and enriched themselves with the spoil. Israel, too, grew rich with the relics of her drowned adversaries. How often do great afflictions work our lasting good. Leviathan, who would have devoured us, is himself devoured, and out of the monster we gather sweetness. Let us not give way to fear; hydra-headed evils shall be slain, and monstrous difficulties shall be overcome, and all things shall work our lasting good.

15. "*Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood.*" Jordan was divided by Jehovah's power; the Lord is able to repeat his miracles, what he did with a sea, he can do with a river; lesser difficulties shall be removed as well as greater ones. Perhaps the fountain refers to the smitten rock, which from its cleft poured forth a perpetual stream; so the Lord opens to us springs of water in the wilderness. "*Thou driedst up mighty rivers,*" rivers which were permanent, and not like the transient torrents of the land, were dried up for awhile; the Jordan itself, being such, was laid dry for a season. Observe the repetition of the pronoun "thou;" the song is all for God, and the prayer is all directed to him. The argument is that he who wrought such wonders would be pleased to do the like now that an emergency had arisen.

16. "*The day is thine, the night also is thine.*" Thou art not restricted by times and seasons. Our prosperity comes from thee, and our adversity is ordained by thee. Thou rulest in the darkness, and one glance of thine eye kindles it into day. Lord, be not slack to keep thy word, but rise for the help of thy people. "*Thou hast prepared the light and the sun.*" Both light and the light-bearer are of thee. Our help, and the instrument of it, are both in thy hand. There is no limit to thy power; be pleased to display it and make thy people glad. Let thy sacred preparations of mercy ripen; say, "Let there be light," and light shall at once dispel our gloom.

17. "*Thou hast set all the borders of the earth.*" Land and sea receive their boundaries from thee. Continents and islands are mapped by thy hand. Observe, again, how everything is ascribed to the divine agency by the use of the pronoun "thou;" not a word about natural laws, and original forces, but the Lord is seen as working all. It will be well when all our "ologies" are tinctured with "theology," and the Creator is seen at work amid his universe. The argument of our text is, that he who bounds the sea can restrain his foes; and he who guards the borders of the dry land can also protect his chosen. "*Thou hast made summer and winter.*" Return, then, good Lord, to us the bright summer days of joy. We know that all our changes come of thee, we have already felt the rigours of thy winter, grant us now the genial glow of thy summer smile. The God of nature is the God of grace; and we may argue from the revolving seasons that sorrow is not meant to rule the year, the flowers of hope will blossom, and ruddy fruits of joy will ripen yet.

18. "*Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O Lord.*" Against thee, the ever glorious Maker of all things, have they spoken, thine honour have they assailed, and defied even thee. This is forcible pleading indeed, and reminds us of Moses and Hezekiah in their intercessions: "What wilt thou do unto thy great name?" "It may be that the Lord thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, who hath reproached the living God." Jehovah is a jealous God, and will surely glorify his own name; here our hope finds foothold. "*And that the foolish people have blasphemed thy name.*" The meanness of the enemy is here pleaded. Sinners are fools, and shall fools be allowed to insult the Lord and oppress his people; shall the abjects curse the Lord and defy him to his face? When error grows too bold its day is near, and its fall certain. Arrogance foreshadows ripeness of evil, and the next step is rottenness. Instead of being alarmed when bad men grow worse and more audacious, we may reasonably take heart, for the hour of their judgment is evidently near.

19. "*O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude of the wicked.*" Thy poor church is weak and defenceless as a dove, but yet her adversaries cannot touch her without thy permission; do not give them leave to devour her, consign her not to the merciless fangs of her foes. She is thy dove, thy turtle, thy favoured one, do not cast her to her enemies. Be merciful, and preserve the weak. Thus may we each plead, and with good hope of prevailing, for the Lord is very pitiful and full of compassion. "*Forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever.*" They look to thee for everything, for they are very poor, and they are thy poor, and there is a company of them, collected by thyself; do not turn thy back on them for long, do not appear strange unto them, but let their poverty plead with thee; turn thou unto them, and visit thine afflicted. In such pleas we also can personally join when at any time we are sorely tried, and the Lord's presence is hidden from us.

20. "*Have respect unto the covenant.*" Here is the master-key,—heaven's gate must open to this. God is not a man that he should lie; his covenant he will not break, nor alter the thing that hath gone forth out of his lips. The Lord had promised to bless the seed of Abraham, and make them a blessing; here they plead that ancient word, even as we also may plead the covenant made with the Lord Jesus for all believers. What a grand word it is! Reader, do you know how to cry, "Have respect unto thy covenant"? "*For the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.*" Darkness is the fit hour

for beasts of prey, and ignorance the natural dwelling-place of cruelty. All the world is in a measure dark, and hence everywhere there are cruel enemies of the Lord's people; but in some places a sevenfold night of superstition and unbelief has settled down, and there rage against the saints reaches to madness. Has not the Lord declared that the whole earth shall be filled with his glory? How can this be if he always permits cruelty to riot in dark places? Surely, he must arise, and end the days of wrong, the era of oppression. This verse is a most telling missionary prayer.

21. "*O let not the oppressed return ashamed.*" Though broken and crushed they come to thee with confidence; suffer them not to be disappointed, for then they will be ashamed of their hope. "*Let the poor and needy praise thy name.*" By thy speedy answer to their cries make their hearts glad, and they will render to thee their gladdest songs. It is not the way of the Lord to allow any of those who trust in him to be put to shame; for his word is, "He shall call upon me, and I will deliver him, and he shall glorify me."

22. "*Arise, O God, plead thine own cause.*" Answer thou the taunts of the profane by arguments which shall annihilate both the blasphemy and the blasphemer. God's judgments are awful replies to the defiances of his foes. When he makes empires crumble, and smites persecutors to the heart, his cause is pleaded by himself as none other could have advocated it. O that the Lord himself would come into the battle-field. Long has the fight been trembling in the balance; one glance of his eye, one word from his lip, and the banners of victory shall be borne on the breeze. "*Remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily.*" The Lord is begged to remember that he is himself reproached, and that by a mere man—that man a fool, and he is also reminded that these foul reproaches are incessant, and repeated with every revolving day. It is bravely done when faith can pluck pleas out of the dragon's mouth, and out of the blasphemies of fools find arguments with God.

23. "*Forget not the voice of thine enemies.*" Great warrior, let the foemen's taunt provoke thee to the fray. They challenge thee; accept thou the gage of battle, and smite them with thy terrible hand. If the cries of thy children are too feeble to be heard, be pleased to note the loud voices of thy foes, and silence their profanities for ever. "*The tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually.*" The ungodly clamour against thee and thy people, their blasphemies are loud and incessant, they defy thee, even thee, and because thou repliest not they laugh thee to scorn. They go from bad to worse, from worse to worst; their fury swells like the thunders of an advancing tempest. What will it come to? What infamy will next be hurled at thee and thine? O God, wilt thou for ever bear this? Hast thou no regard for thine honour, no respect for thy glory?

Much of this Psalm has passed over our mind while beholding the idolatries of Rome,* and remembering her bloody persecution of the saints. O Lord, how long shall it be ere thou wilt ease thyself of those profane wretches, the priests, and cast the harlot of Babylon into the ditch of corruption? May thy church never cease to plead with thee till judgment shall be executed, and the Lord avenged upon Antichrist.

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* The Author visited Rome in November and December, 1871, while this portion of the Treasury of David was in progress.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—There is one singularity in this Psalm which reminds one strongly of Psalm xliv.: there is not one mention of national or personal sin throughout, no allusion to the Lord's righteous dealing in their punishment, no supplication for pardon and forgiveness; and yet one can hardly doubt that the writer of the Psalm, be he who he may, must have felt as keenly as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, or any other prophet of the captivity, the sins and iniquities which had brought all this sore evil upon them. But still, though there be expostulation, there is no complaint; though there be mourning, there is no murmuring; there is far more the cry of a smitten child, wondering why, and grieving that his father's face is so turned away from him in displeasure, and a father's hand so heavy on the child of his love. Or, as we might almost say, it is like the cry of one of those martyred ones beneath the altar, wondering at the Lord's continued endurance of his heritage thus trampled under foot of the marauder and oppressor, and exclaiming, "How long, O Lord, how long?" And yet it is the appeal of one who was still a sufferer, still groaning under the pressure of his calamities, "Why hast thou cast *us* off for ever? *We* see not *our* signs, there is no more any prophet among *us*."—*Barton Bouchier.*

Whole Psalm.—The peculiarity of this Psalm is marked by the very frequent use of the נֶצַח, "*for ever*:" verses 1, 3, 10.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 1.—This Psalm, and particularly these words, do contain the church's sad lamentation over her deep affliction, together with her earnest expostulations with God about the cause. Two things there are that the church in these words doth plead with God. First, *The greatness of her affliction;* secondly, *the nearness of her relation.* 1. *The greatness of her affliction.* And there were three things in her affliction that did make it lie very heavy upon her. First, the *root* of this affliction; and that was God's "*anger*:" "Why doth thine *anger* smoke," etc. Secondly, the *height* of this affliction: God was not only angry, but he did "*smoke*" in his anger. Thirdly, the *length* of this affliction: it was so long that God did seem to cast them off "*for ever*." 2. *The nearness of her relation:* "Against *the sheep of thy pasture*;" as if they should have said, Lord, if thou hadst done this against thine enemies, it had been no wonder; if thou hadst poured out thy wrath against the vessels of wrath, it had not been so much. But what! wilt thou draw out thy sword against *the sheep of thy pasture?* It were no wonder that thou shouldst take the fat and the strong, and pour out thy judgments upon them; but wilt thou do it to *thy sheep?* There be several doctrines that I may raise from these words; as, First doctrine: That God's people are his sheep. Second doctrine: That God may be sorely angry with his own people, with his own sheep. Third doctrine: That when God is angry with his people, it becomes them carefully to enquire into the cause. Fourth doctrine: That when God's people are under afflictions, they ought to take notice of, and be much affected with, his anger, from which they do proceed. Fifth doctrine: That God's people under afflictions are, or should be, more affected with his anger than with their smart. This is that which the church doth complain of, not that the church did so smart, but that God was displeased and angry; that did most affect them. Sixth doctrine: That God's people are apt to have misgiving thoughts of God when they are in sore afflictions. God was angry with his people, and their hearts did misgive them, as if God did cast off his people. Seventh doctrine: That God may be angry with his people, so sore, and so long, that in the judgment of sense it may seem that they are for ever cast off. Eighth doctrine: That though the people of God may not murmur against his proceedings, yet they may humbly expostulate with him about the cause.—*Joseph Alleine.* 1633—1668.

Verse 1.—"*Why doth thine anger smoke*," etc. Anger is a fire; and in men, and other creatures enraged, a smoke seemeth to go out of their nostrils.

Xenophon saith of the Thebans, when they are angry they breathe fire. This then is spoken of God, after the manner of men.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 1.—"*The sheep of thy pasture.*" There is nothing more imbecile than a sheep: simple, frugal, gentle, tame, patient, prolific, timid, domesticated, stupid, useful. Therefore, while the name of *sheep* is here used, it is suggested how pressing the necessity is for divine assistance, and how well-befitting the Most High it would be to make their cause his own.—*Lorinus.*

Verse 2.—"*Remember thy congregation.*" It is not without reason that they do not say, Remember *us*, but "*Remember thy congregation*," not ours, but thine; nor *that* because it has now begun to be thine, but "*which thou hast purchased of old, the rod of thine inheritance which thou hast redeemed.*" likewise, this Mount Zion; not wherein we, but wherein "*thou* hast dwelt." They had nothing which they could bring before an angry God with greater confidence, than that ancient lovingkindness shown to their fathers in former days.—*Musculus.*

Verse 2.—"*The rod of thine inheritance.*" שֵׁבֶט נַחֲלָתֶךָ, *the inheritance-rod* is the staff with which the inheritance is measured; קָנֶה הַמִּדָּה = שֵׁבֶט, the land-surveyor's rod (Ez. xl. 3): and this is used as גּוֹרָל, *the lot*, is for *the portion*, for the *inheritance itself.*—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 2.—"*Thine inheritance.*" It signifies a nation, which through all successions God had a peculiar right and title to.—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 2.—"*Thou hast redeemed,*" *i.e.* the purchased people, by restoring them when they had been alienated, and had fallen into the hands of others: like a *goel*, or near kinsman, who ransoms a brother hurried into captivity, and regains an *inheritance* that has been sold.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 3.—"*Lift up thy feet.*" Or, *thy hammers*, that is, "thy strokes," to "stamp" or "beat down" the enemy "unto perpetual desolations." Thus the "feet" are used to "tread down with," Isai. xxvi. 6; and so the Greek taketh it here, changing the metaphor, and translating it, "thy hands," which are also instruments to strike down with. Or, "*lift up thy feet*," that is, come quickly to see "*the perpetual desolations*," which the enemy hath made.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 3.—"*Lift up thy feet.*" Abu Walid renders it, *Tread hard upon thine enemies.* The Jewish Arab, *Shew forth thy punishment*, adding in a note that the *lifting up the feet* implies punishment, the bringing under by force being usually expressed by *treading under the feet.*—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 3.—"*Lift up thy feet*," etc. To these *desolations* they seek that God would *lift up his footsteps*, that is, that he would approach. In Gen. xxix. 1, there occurs the phrase, *to lift the feet;* here the expression is much more marked—*to lift up the footsteps*—and must be taken to mean a swift, impetuous, majestic, and powerful approach: like a hero, who strikes the ground with heavy tread, and advances rapidly with far-sounding footsteps.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 3.—"*In the sanctuary.*" Their cities had been laid waste, their provinces, their farms, their vineyards, their oliveyards. They themselves had been everywhere cut down without striking a blow in defence, and their means of life had been snatched away without resistance. Yet they speak not of these things; not because things of this sort ought not to cause grief, nor yet because the saints are not touched with a sense of their loss; but because those things which threatened the extinction of religion and the worship of God, overtopped the feeling of all these other misfortunes with an intolerable sorrow.—*Musculus.*

Verse 4.—"*Thine enemies roar*," etc. The word שָׁאַג is used especially of the roar of the lion. . . . . In this place we may justly extend the application of the verb to those noisy words, whether mirthful or boastful, blasphemous

against God and calamitous to his people (verse 10), breathing terror and threatenings through edicts; or rude and senseless, as in their idolatrous worship; or in their prayers and thoughtless songs. As in Isa. lii. 5, its meaning is *to howl.—Hermann Venema.*

Verse 4.—"*They set up their ensigns for signs.*" The meaning is, that the enemy, having abolished the signs of the true God, of his people and religion, such as circumcision, the feasts, sacrifices, the other ordinances of religion, and other marks of liberty, substituted his own idolatrous signs, as the signs of his authority and religion.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verses 4—7.—[*The persecution under Antiochus.* B.C. 168.] Athenæus proceeded to Jerusalem, where, with the assistance of the garrison, he prohibited and suppressed every observance of the Jewish religion, forced the people to profane the Sabbath, to eat swine's flesh and other unclean food, and expressly forbade the national rite of circumcision. The Temple was dedicated to Jupiter Olympius: the statue of that deity was erected on part of the altar of burnt offerings, and sacrifice duly performed. . . . . As a last insult, the feasts of the Bacchanalia, the license of which, as they were celebrated in the later ages of Greece, shocked the severe virtue of the older Romans, were substituted for the national festival of Tabernacles. The reluctant Jews were forced to join in these riotous orgies, and to carry the ivy, the insignia of the God. So near was the Jewish nation, and the worship of Jehovah, to total extermination. —*Henry Hart Milman* (1791—1868), *in* "*A History of the Jews.*"

[*Under Titus.*] And now the Romans, upon the flight of the seditious into the city, and upon the burning of the holy house itself, and of all the buildings lying round about it, brought their ensigns to the temple, and set them over-against its eastern-gate; and there did they offer sacrifices to them, and there did they make Titus imperator, with the greatest acclamations of joy.—*Josephus.*

Verse 5.—"*A man was famous,*" etc. It enhances the cruelty of the enemy that the temple which had been built at the cost of so much treasure, adorned with such great elegance and splendour, and finished with untiring industry and consummate skill, was not saved thereby from their barbarous hands, but was utterly overthrown. There is a simile in these verses. The enemies breaking to pieces with great violence and casting down the altars and beams of the temple, are compared to the woodman, who with axe in hand cuts down the strong trees of the wood.—*Mollerus.*

Verse 5.—"*A man was famous,*" etc. That is, very renowned were the workmen, who, by Hiram's order, cut down the rough cedars and firs in the thick Tyrian forests, for the building of thy Temple, and thereby they did an acceptable service to thee.—*Thomas Fenton.*

Verse 6.—"*The carved work thereof.*" Even barbarian invaders are wont to spare the more splendid buildings for art's sake. Demetrius, when he had taken a picture painted by Protogenes in the suburbs of Rhodes, was besought by the Rhodians to be lenient towards art, lest he should destroy the painting. He replied that he would sooner burn the statues of his father than so great a work of art. The ferocity of these enemies, therefore, outdoes the barbarity of others, for they ruthlessly cast down an edifice sculptured and polished with the greatest skill.—*Mollerus.*

Verse 6.—"*The carved work.*" פִּתּוּחִים *Pittuchim:* used in 1 Kings vi. 29, of the "carved figures of cherubim, and palm-trees, and open flowers," which were on the Temple walls.—*William Kay.*

Verse 6.—"*With axes and hammers.*" It is noted by a learned interpreter, that the words in the original rendered in our translation, "*with axes and hammers,*" are not properly Hebrew, but Syriac words, purposely to hint thereby the time when and the persons by whom this was done.—*Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 8.—"*The synagogues of God.*" It is the opinion of Spencer, Vitringa,

and of the learned in general, that the institution of synagogues for worship originated in the reading of the law publicly after the collection of its volumes by Ezra, and that, consequently, there were no such places of solemn assembly previous to the Babylonish captivity. Some of the Jews themselves have expressed a conviction that this is the fact, and the Scriptures give no intimation of their existence antecedently to that time. We are aware, however, that one of the first Hebraists of the present day, the Rev. Dr. M'Caul, inclines to the opinion of an earlier origin than that generally adopted. We quote his words: "The existence of such places before the Babylonish captivity has been much disputed; and most writers, arguing from the silence of the Old Testament, incline to the opinion that they originated in Babylon, and that after the restoration similar oratories were opened in the land of Israel; and hence some infer that the Seventy-fourth Psalm, which says in the eighth verse, "*They have burned up all the synagogues in the land*," was written in the post-Babylonian times. The argument from silence is, however, far from conclusive. The translation of מוֹעֲדֵי as *synagogues*, in the verse just cited, might fairly lead to a similar translation in some other passages which were confessedly written before the captivity; and the circumstances, character, and necessities of the Israelites, the great body of whom were far removed from the temple, prove indisputably that in their towns and villages they must have had some locality where they assembled on their sabbaths, new moons, and other solemn days, for the purpose of receiving instruction in the law, and for public prayer. That locality, however different from subsequent arrangements, was the origin of the *synagogue*. How such assemblies were conducted before the captivity it is now impossible to say."—*F. A. Cox.*

Verse 8.—"*Synagogues.*" Dr. Prideaux affirms that they had no synagogue before the Babylonish captivity; for the main service of the synagogue, says he, being the reading of the law unto the people, where there was no book of the law to be read, there certainly could be no synagogue. But how rare the book of the law was through all Judæa, before the Babylonish captivity, many texts of Scripture tell us. When Jehoshaphat sent teachers through all Judæa, to instruct the people in the law of God, they carried a book of the law with them (2 Chron. xvii. 9), which they needed not have done if there had been any copies of the law in those cities to which they went; which certainly there would have been had there been any synagogues in them. And when Hilkiah found the law in the temple (2 Kings xxii. 8), neither he nor king Josiah needed to have been so surprised at it, had books of the law been common in those times. Their behaviour on that occasion sufficiently proves they had never seen it before, which could not be the case had there then been any other copies of it to be found among the people; and if there were no copies of the law at that time among them, there could then be most certainly no *synagogues* for them to resort to for the hearing of it read unto them. From whence he concludes there could be no *synagogues* among the Jews, till after the Babylonish captivity.—*Cruden's Concordance.*

Verse 8.—"*Synagogues.*" The assertion of those who are in favour of the Maccabæan origin of the Psalm, that these words describe the destruction of the *synagogues*, is met by the remark, that in all the copious accounts which we have of the transactions of these times, there is nothing said of any such work of destruction.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 8.—"*Synagogues.*" In the Old Testament we find no traces of meetings for worship in synagogues. Temporary altars, groves, and high places were used alike by the Jewish saints and sinners for the worship of God and idols. The only pre-exile instance which seems to indicate that the devout in Israel were in the habit of resorting to pious leaders for blessings and instruction on stated occasions, is to be found in 2 Kings iv. 23, where the Shunamite's husband asks, "Wherefore wilt thou go to him (Elisha) to-day? It is neither new moon nor Sabbath." Yet 2 Kings xxii. 8, etc.; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14, etc., testify undoubtedly against the existence of places of worship under

the monarchy. It is during the exile, whilst the temple-worship was in abeyance, that we find indubitable proof of the systematic meetings on fasts for devotion and instruction (Zech. vii. 3—5; viii. 19). Religious meetings were also held on Sabbaths and fasts, to instruct the exiles in the divine law, and to admonish them to obey the divine precepts, (Ezra x. 1—9; Neh. viii. 1—3; ix. 1—3; xiii. 1—3). These meetings, held near the temple and in other localities, were the origin of the *synagogue*, and the place in which the people assembled was denominated *the house of assembly*. Hence, also, the synagogue in the temple itself. . . . . These synagogues soon became very popular, so that the psalmist in depicting worship in the time of the Maccabees declares that the many meeting-places of God—or "*the Synagogues of God*" as the A.V. rightly renders it—have been laid waste.—*Christian D. Ginsburg, in Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature.*

Verse 8 (*second clause*).—The sense seems to be, *they* (the Chaldæan invaders) *have abolished all the solemnities in the land.* They have taken away the daily sacrifice; they have put an end to the festivals and feasts of our holy ritual. Compare Lam. ii. 6: "He hath violently taken away his tabernacle; he hath destroyed his places of the assembly," (or rather, his assembly, his *moëd*). "The Lord hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion."—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 9.—"*We see not our signs.*" As if they had said, heretofore God was wont to give us signs and tokens, he would even work miracles for us, or he would send a prophet to instruct and advise us what to do; we had those who could tell us "*how long*," that is, how long our troubles should last, and when we should have our expected end of them; but now we are in trouble, and no man can tell us how long, now we are left to the wide world, to shift for ourselves as well as we can; the Lord will not advise us what to do, nor give us his mind what's best to be done, or how to proceed: thus deplorable was their condition upon the hiding of God's face from them.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 9.—"*We see not our signs.*" These signs, which he mourned that he did not see, were certain outward marks of God's special favour, certain testimonies of his presence, certain memorials that he was with them to bless them. And it is said that there were five things in Solomon's temple destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, which were not in the second temple, which was erected after the Babylonish captivity. Five memorials or tokens of God's special presence were there wanting. One was the ark of the covenant; another, the fire from heaven upon the brazen altar; the third, the Shechinah, or cloud that rested upon the mercy-seat; the fourth, the Urim and Thummim which were in the breast-plate of the high-priest; and the fifth, the spirit of prophecy. For though there were the prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, at the time of, and shortly after, the restoration; yet the spirit of prophecy ceased with Malachi, and did not re-appear until John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Lord Jesus. . . . . The lamentation of the church here, then, was, that she saw not her signs. So now, the church of the living God, the regenerate family of Zion, have often reason to pour out the same melancholy complaint. Signs of God's favour, marks and testimonies of his work of grace upon their souls, are often so out of sight, so buried in obscurity, so enveloped in clouds of darkness, that the living family are compelled, from soul-feeling, to take up the language of lamentation here expressed, and say, "*We see not our signs.*"—*J. C. Philpot.* 1802—1869.

Verse 9.—"*Our signs.*" The ordinary "*signs*" of Israel being God's peculiar people are the passover (Exod. xii. 13), the Sabbath (Exod. xxxi. 13), the temple, the altar, the sacrifices; the extraordinary ones are God's miracles wrought in his people's behalf (Ps. lxxviii. 43).—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 9.—"*There is no more any prophet.*" By us it ought to be observed what they do not say: It is not,—here is no more any giant or warlike leader who may deliver us from the adversary: but, there is no

more any prophet. And yet when the prophets were with them, they were contemptible in the eyes of all, maltreated by the wicked and put to death.—*Musculus.*

Verse 10.—"*Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?*" The sinner never leaves his sin till sin first leaves him: did not death put a stop to his sin, he would never cease from sin. This may be illustrated by a similitude thus: A company of gamesters resolve to play all night, and accordingly they sit down to chess tables, or some other game; their candle, accidentally or unexpectedly, goes out, or is put out, or burnt out; their candle being out, they are forced to give over their game, and go to bed in the dark; but had the candle lasted all night, they would have played all night. This is every sinner's case in regard of sin: did not death put out the candle of life, the sinner would sin still. Should the sinner live for ever, he would sin for ever; and, therefore, it is a righteous thing with God to punish him for ever in hellish torments. Every impenitent sinner would sin to the days of eternity, if he might live to the days of eternity. "*O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?*" For ever, and evermore; or for ever and yet—for so the Hebrew loves to exaggerate: as if the sinner, the blasphemer, would set a term of duration longer than eternity to sin in. The psalmist implicitly saith, Lord, if thou dost but let them alone for ever, they will certainly blaspheme thy name for ever and ever. I have read of the crocodile, that he knows no *maximum quod sic*, he is always growing bigger and bigger, and never comes to a certain pitch of monstrosity so long as he lives. *Quamdiu vivit crescit.* Every habituated sinner would, if he were let alone, be such a monster, perpetually growing worse and worse.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 12.—"*God is my King of old,*" etc. Let us learn from this verse how to think of our God. First, that he is our King, and therefore we ought to be encouraged to pray for his help against the ungodly, and to place ourselves in entire submission to his will and government. Secondly, that he is not a new God, but the Ancient of Days, and that whatever salvation has been wrought not only in the midst of his own people, but in the midst of the whole earth, even among those by whom he is not acknowledged, has been wrought by him. Let this meaning strike at the root of all trust in other gods, or in any creature.—*Musculus.*

Verse 13.—"*Thou didst divide the sea.*" Thou, O Lord, didst make firm the flowing sea, that there might be a way for our fathers to pass over, and in those very waters through which thou didst lead thy ransomed, thou didst utterly overthrow the hosts of Egypt, who were like dragons for ferocity, as they sought to devour thy people.—*Jansenius.*

Verse 14.—"*Thou brakest the heads of leviathan,*" etc. It is spoken of Pharaoh's army which God destroyed in the Red Sea; that is, the destruction of the Egyptians was a pledge of the accomplishment of God's promise to cast the Canaanite out of the promised land, and to give them possession of it. Many hardships they were to pass through in the wilderness, but God gave them this mercy as food, not to their bodies, but food to their faith, while they were in the wilderness: therefore, those former great and glorious promises were accomplished. So that former mercies are food that God gives unto the faith of his people to feed upon, till he hath perfectly accomplished whatever he hath promised unto his church.—*William Strong.*

Verse 14.—"*Leviathan.*" The Arabic Lexicographers (quoted by Bochart) affirm that *Pharao*, in the Egyptian language, signified a crocodile. Parkhurst remarks that in Schenchzer's Physica Sacra may be seen a medal with Julius Cæsar's head on one side, and on the reverse a crocodile with this inscription:

ÆGYPTO CAPTA, *Egypt taken.* M. Mariette has discovered at Karnak a monumental stele of Thothmes on which that king says of himself,

> "Fierce as the huge crocodile, I made them see the glory of my God;
> Terrible Lord of the waters, none dare even approach him."

Verse 14.—"*Leviathan*" is a name given not only to the crocodile, but to the whale and other large fishes. The Zum, or people inhabiting the wilderness, are supposed, by many sensible writers, to be the Ichthyophagi, or fish-eaters, who occupied, according to ancient authors, a part of the coast of the Red Sea. The psalmist is here speaking of Israel's passage through its waters; and it is a singular fact that Diodorus, who lived about two thousand years ago, mentions a tradition, prevalent amongst these very persons, to the effect that in the time of their remote forefathers an extraordinary reflux took place, the channel of the gulf becoming dry, and the green bottom appearing, whilst the whole body of water rolled away in an opposite direction. There can be little doubt that this strange people would have used for food, and various purposes, such great fish as might have been cast ashore on the termination of the miracle. Most writers give this text a figurative meaning, but that is no reason why it may not be also literally understood; for such a mode of speaking is common in the Bible. But whether we understand it one way or the other, we have the testimony of heathens to its propriety and force. If, by the term "*Leviathan*," we believe Egypt to be intended, and by its "*heads*" those petty states into which that country was divided, the traditions of India, and the East, inform us that such designations were well understood, and therefore beautifully applicable.—*Anon., in "Biblical and Theological Gleanings: by William O'Neill."* 1854.

Verse 14.—"*Meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.*" May not the exact meaning be that even as the sea-monsters washed upon the shore furnished food for the inhabitants of the Red Sea, even so the symbolic dragon power of Egypt when destroyed at the Red Sea became food for Israel's faith, and even furnished provision for their wilderness journey by the spoil which was cast up by the tide.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 15.—"*Flood.*" God in dividing Jordan did not only divide the water that ordinarily belonged to the river, or the water which came from its fountains, but also the extraordinary additional waters by the great rains a little before harvest. So God *cleared* both *the fountain, i.e.*, the fountain water, *and the flood.*—*Jonathan Edwards.*

***Verse* 16.—"*The day is thine, the night also is thine.*"**

> Ah! don't be sorrowful, darling,
> And don't be sorrowful, pray—
> Taking the year together, my dear,
> There isn't more night than day.
>
> * * * *
>
> And God is God, my darling,
> Of night as well as day;
> And we feel and know that we can go,
> Wherever he leads the way.
>
> A God of the night, my darling,
> Of the night of death so grim,
> The gate that leads out of life, good wife,
> Is the gate that leads to Him.

From "In the Sere and Yellow Leaf," in "The Circling Year."

Verse 16.—"*Day.*" "*Night.*" These changes are *according to a fixed law.* Day and night are the ordinances of heaven upon earth for the growth of earth's life, and, if we could trace the sunshine and the dark in every follower of God, we should see them arranged with equal wisdom. It is a more complex work, but, be sure of this, there is order in it all, and the hand that rules the world in

its orbit, and that makes it fulfil its course through light and shade, is governing our lives for a higher than earthly end. One feature of the law is presented so far for our guidance. *It is a law of alternation.* It is day and night, and, let us thank God, it is also in due time night and day. Each has its time and use.—*John Ker.* 1869.

Verse 16.—"*Thou hast prepared the light.*" It is but recently that we have been able to form any conception of the power of light as an agent in the economy of the globe; the discoveries of Actinism are among the most interesting and marvellous of natural science. The discovery that "no substance can be exposed to the sun's rays without undergoing a chemical change," has been described as scarcely less important in its effects than the discovery of the law of gravitation. A sunbeam is one of the most powerful of all the agencies of nature; magical as it is, it breaks up the strongest chemical affinities; it is the author of colour, and is the creator of a myriad combinations, which all tend to the harmony of the world. Nor ought we to forget the moral influence of light. We are all aware of the sensible difference produced in our moral natures by a fine day or a dark day. Light gives zest and tone to the spirits; light gives buoyancy and joy to the soul; light crowds the chambers of the mind with ideas; Light is *Life:* the merest insect could not live without light; and even blind natures receive, in those organs which are not the property of vision, the assurance of its benignant operations. Light is *Order:* and at its wand and command the separation takes place, and dark and light pair off into their separate ranks. Light is *Beauty:* whether in the refulgence of the moon; the chill sparkle of the stars; the unrivalled play of colours in the attenuated film of the soap-bubble, at once the toy of childhood and the tool of the sage; the rich play of tints in the mother-of-pearl, or the rich gorgeous rays in the plumes of birds. Light is *Purity:* forms that rankle out of the glance of its clear, steady beam, contract around themselves loathsomeness and disgust, and become the seats of foulness and shame. Light is *Growth:* where it is, we know that nature pursues her work in life and in vigour; light gives vitality to the sap; light removes obstructions from the pathway of the growing agencies, while, in its absence, forms become stunted, gnarled, and impaired. Light is *Health:* as it darts its clear and brilliant points to and fro, it brings in its train those blessings of elasticity and energy, which give the fulness of being—which is perfect health to the expanding forms. There is a fine consistency, when Scripture makes light to contain, as it were, the seeds of all things, and when the prelude of all creation is made to be those words, "God said, Let there be light."

This, then, is the part light is made to play in the history of the world; it is used by moral power to become the creator of moral influence. What a long series of creations elapsed before moral causes seemed to operate in the affairs of the globe! But he, whose nature and whose name are Light, had given to light its distinct being and work; and that creative word, "*Let there be light,*" spoke right forwards to the moral energies which were to be superinduced by its creation. Thus light, it is true, went before all things, and became the cause of moral consequences; but then, this arose from the divine hand, whence darted its benevolent beams. *It was God* who gave it its divine commission, to divide between light and darkness; *it was God* who made it the fountain of knowledge and of day; *it was God* who gave to it the faculty to become, in turn, a creator, and to warm into life and beauty a myriad seeds and shapes of loveliness.—*E. Paxton Hood.*

Verse 16.—"*The light and the sun.*" I was considerably affected in my younger days by the long-standing objection, that Moses made *light* to exist before the creation of the sun; as books then usually taught, what some still fancy, that there could not have been light without this luminary. But not choosing, on such important point, to attach my faith to any general assertion, I sought to find out if any investigator of the nature of light had perceived any distinction in its qualities or operation, which made it a fluid or matter independent of the sun. It was not easy, before the year 1791, to meet with the

works of any student of nature on such a subject, as it had been little attended to; but I at length saw the fact asserted by Henckel, a German of the old school, of some value in his day, and soon afterwards some experiments were announced in England which confirmed the supposition. It has been a favourite point of attention with me ever since; and no truth in philosophy seems to be now more clearly ascertained than that light has a distinct existence, separate and independent of the sun. This is a striking confirmation of the Mosaic record; for that expressly distinguishes the existence and operation of light from the solar action upon it, and from that radiation of it which is connected with his beams and presence. By Moses, an interval of three days is placed between the luminous creation, and the appearance and position of the sun and moon. Light was, therefore, operating by its own laws and agencies, without the sun, and independently of his peculiar agency, from the first day to the fourth of our terrestrial fabrication. But from the time that the sun was placed in his central position, and his rays were appointed to act on our earth, they have been always performing most beneficial operations, essential to the general course of things.—*Sharon Turner* (1768—1847), *in* "*The Sacred History of the World.*"

Verse 17.—"*Thou hast set all the borders of the earth.*" The actual distribution of sea and land over the surface of the globe is likewise of the highest importance to the present condition of organic life. If the ocean were considerably smaller, or if Asia and America were concentrated within the tropics, the tides, the oceanic currents, and the meteorological phenomenon on which the existence of the vegetable and animal kingdoms depend, would be so profoundly modified, that it is extremely doubtful whether man could have existed, and absolutely certain that he could never have risen to a high degree of civilisation. The dependence of human progress upon the existing configuration of the globe necessarily leads us to the conclusion that both must be the harmonious work of the same Almighty Power, and that a divine and immutable plan has from all eternity presided over the destinies of our planet. It is almost superfluous to point out how largely the irregular windings and undulations of the coasts, the numerous islands scattered over the face of the waters, the promontories stretching far away into the domains of the sea, and the gulfs plunging deeply into the bosom of the land, have contributed to the civilisation of the human race by multiplying its points of contact with the ocean, the great highway of nations.—*G. Hartwig, in* "*The Harmonies of Nature.*" 1866.

Verse 17.—"*Thou hast set all the borders of the earth.*" Consider the form of the earth. It is known to be globular, and in shape nearly like an orange. And why has God chosen that form? With a view that it might be inhabited by living creatures on its whole surface. In order to this, every part of the globe must have sufficient light and heat, the wind must have a free circulation, and the water must be diffused over all its parts. The rotundity of the earth is best calculated to promote these conveniences: for this round form admits light and heat, without which there could be no life all over the globe. The revolutions of day and night, the changes in the temperature of the air, heat, cold, dryness or moisture, could not have taken place without this form. Had the earth been square, had it been conic, had it been an hexagon, or any other angular form, what must the consequence have been? The greatest part of our earth would have been drowned, whilst the rest would have languished with drought. Some countries must have been torn in pieces by storms, while others would have been deprived of the wholesome circulation of wind. I have new reason to admire the supreme wisdom, when I reflect on the enormous mass which composes our world. Were the earth softer, or more spongy than it is, men and animals would sink into it; were it harder and less penetrable, it would resist the toil of the labourer, and lose its capacity for producing and nourishing the multitude of plants, herbs, roots, and flowers, which now spring

out of its bosom. There are regular and distinct strata found in the earth; some of stone, others of metals and minerals. There are numerous and evident advantages which result from these in favour of mankind. Do not the strata of gravel, sunk deep in the earth, purify and in a manner filter the water, and render it sweet and fit for use? On the surface of the earth there is a varied prospect; there is an admirable mixture of plains and valleys, of small hills and mountains. The man must be blind indeed that does not see the wise purpose of the Great Author of nature, in thus diversifying the surface of the earth. Were the earth an even plain, how much beauty would it lose? Besides, this variety of valley and mountain is very favourable to the health of living creatures, and were there no hills, the earth would be less peopled with men and animals. There would be fewer plants, fewer simples and trees. We should be deprived of metals and minerals: the vapours would not be condensed, nor should we have either springs or rivers. Must we not then acknowledge that the whole plan of the earth, its form, its inward and outward construction, are all regulated according to the wisest laws, which all combine towards the pleasure and happiness of mankind. O thou supreme Author of nature, thou hast done all things well! Whichever way I turn my eyes, whether I penetrate into the interior structure of the globe thou hast appointed me to inhabit, or whether I examine its surface, I everywhere discover marks of profound wisdom and infinite goodness.—*Christopher Christian Sturm.*

Verse 17.—"*Thou hast made summer and winter.*" *Plasmasti ea.* Now thou that hast done all this and more for mankind in general, wilt thou be wanting to thy church?—*John Trapp.*

Verse 17.—"*Winter.*" As if fatigued with so many cares, nature now rests; this, however, is only to collect new force, again to be employed for the good of the world. But even this rest, which nature enjoys in winter, is a secret activity. A new creation is preparing in silence. The necessary dispositions are already making, that the desolate earth may again recover the children she has lost. The corn which is to serve us for food, already shoots. The fibres of plants, which are to adorn our fields and gardens, begin insensibly to open. O my beneficent Creator! Here I find fresh cause to adore thy wisdom and power. The repose which nature takes is as worthy to enter into the plan of thy wise providence, as the activity she shows in spring and summer. Thou hast wisely combined the several revolutions of the earth, thou hast equally divided its rest and labour. It is thy will that each day should vary the scenes of nature, in that way which is most proper for the perfection of the whole. Pardon, O God, my temerity, if I have been so stupid as to blame anything in the government of the world. I am more than ever convinced that all the plans of thy providence, though they may appear extraordinary to my weak reason, are replete with wisdom and goodness.—*Christopher Christian Sturm.* 1750—1786.

Verse 19.—"*O deliver not,*" etc. How weak soever the church be, and how many and strong soever the enemy be, yet cannot they all devour the church, except the Lord should deliver his church over into their hands, against which evil the church hath ground of confidence to pray, "*O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude of the wicked;*" for he hath given his church wings, and a hiding-place too, as the comparison importeth, if he please to give her the use thereof also.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 19.—The people of God are taught in this form of supplication how to edge and keen their prayers, and make them vigorous; to wit, by disclaiming any ability or sufficiency in themselves; by styling themselves a congregation of poor, silly, weak doves, no way able to encounter an army of bestial, cunning, crafty, bloody, boisterous enemies. This plea the people of God make use of: "With thee the fatherless findeth mercy," Hosea xiv. 3.—*John Langley.*

Verse 19.—"*The soul of thy turtledove.*" They compare themselves to a

turtledove, whose nature leads it, in whatever way it may be afflicted, not to indulge in noisy impatience, but to mourn in secret; so the afflicted people of Israel were unable to do anything but breathe their sighs and groans to God. —*Musculus.*

Verse 19.—"*Thy turtledove.*" God's people are an harmless, innocent people, altogether unable and insufficient to help themselves against their enemies, who are numerous, cruel, and barbarous. Hence they are resembled to sheep, doves; called in the Word, fatherless, orphans, little ones, babes, poor, simple, needy. They are men bound to their good behaviour, may not harbour so much as a bad thought against any; are called to suffer, not to do wrong. Julian did jeer at them for this; he would strike them on the one cheek, and tell them that their Master taught them to turn the other; his soldiers would take away their cloaks, and mind them that they must part with their coats also. Out of their own dispositions they judge of others, therefore may easily be deceived and entrapped. Thus Gedaliah, that sweet man, would not believe the relation of Johanan touching the conspiracy of the crocodile Ishmael against him; nay, was even angry with him for his faithful dealing that way, and it cost him his life. Jer. xl. 16; and xli. That famous admiral of France, Jasper Coligny, though he had information and intelligence from sundry parts beyond the seas, that the court did intend to mischief him, and that there was no security in their promises and agreements, though backed with oaths, thrust himself, notwithstanding, upon the lion, and was smoothed with one paw and torn with the other: being such, they lie open to the rage of many adversaries. . . . .

One would think these turtles should rather win the love of all that come near them than incur the hatred of any, for they are quiet and peaceable persons. In the mount of the Lord there is no hurt done (Isai. xi. 9), yet, notwithstanding, they are maligned by a world of people. Because they are not like them (1 Peter iv. 4); because they are not of their number (John xv. 19); because their persons and their sacrifices are more acceptable with God than the others' (Gen. iv. 4); because they reprove them for their evil ways (John iii. 20); because they are for the most part poor and mean, have no great forecast in worldly affairs, are no deep politicians, they are such as those *pauperes Lugdunensis*, those poor men of Lyons in France, therefore are exposed to beasts and lions (Matt. i. 25); because they mourn for sin in themselves and others: they quarrel with the dove even because of her mournful note. They will jeer at sighing sisters, and men that hang the head like a bulrush; yet, seeing this bulrush cannot grow without mire and mud, why should it not hang the head?—*John Langley.*

Verse 19.—"*Thy turtledove.*" This expression may, perhaps, be further illustrated from the custom, ancient and modern, of keeping doves as favourite birds (see *Theocritus* v. 96, and *Virgil*, Eclog. iii. v. 68, 69), and from the care taken to secure them from such animals as are dangerous to them.—*James Merrick.*

Verse 19.—*Turtle Doves*, of whatever species they be, whether travellers or domesticated, are equally preserved by the inhabitants of Egypt: they do not kill, and never eat them. Wishing to know the motive of this abstinence among people who possess so little in the greater part of their actions, I learnt that it was for the honour of humanity. It is a consequence of the respect due to hospitality, which the Arabs hold in such high estimation, and of which they have communicated some shades to the people who dwell among them. They would regard it as a violation of this hospitality not to spare those birds, which come with a perfect confidence to live amongst them, and there to become skilful but useless receptors of love and tenderness. The very farmer, who sees his harvests a prey to the flights of turtle doves which alight on his fields, neither destroys nor harasses them, but suffers them to multiply in tranquillity.—*C. N. S. de M. Sonnini.* 1775—1811.

Verse 19.—"*Forget not the congregation of thy poor.*" *Thy* poor, by way of discrimination. There may be a greater distance between poor and poor, than

there is between poor and rich. There are many "ragged regiments," "congregations of poor," whom the Lord will forget for ever; but *his* poor shall be saved. And these poor are of two sorts; either poor in regard of wealth and outward substance, or poor in regard of friends or outward assistance. A rich man, especially a godly rich man, may be in a poor case, destitute and forsaken, wanting patronage and protection. God saveth his poor in both notions, both those that have no friends, and those that have no estates.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 20.—"*Have respect.*" The word, in the original signification of it, imports a fastening of the eyes upon some object, that a man desires to look into. Hence, by a metaphor, it is transferred to the eyes of the mind, and signifies a serious weighing and consideration of a thing. God is said to "wink at the times of ignorance," or not to regard it, Acts xvii. 30. God's people here look at God, as if he did wink at his covenant, and neither look at it, nor them in their miseries. The psalmist desires him that he would be mindful of it for his people's deliverance.—*Francis Taylor, in "A Sermon preached before the House of Commons," entitled "God's Covenant the Churches Plea."* 1645.

Verse 20.—"*Have respect unto the covenant.*" This presseth the Lord more than the former; this is the close grappling, as 'twere, with him in the words of Jacob: "I will not let thee go till thou hast blessed me." This is the throwing out of the greatest sheet-anchor in the tempest, for it lays hold on God's faithfulness, and truth, and fatherly goodness. If they be not in covenant with God, it may be charged upon them,—"you have violated my holy law, you have incensed my wrath against you by your perverse ways, therefore I will not help you, but give you up:" but now the souls that be in covenant with God will not be put off so (be it spoken with holy reverence), but will cry out, O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, yet "*have respect unto thy covenant.*" Yet be sure you walk uprightly before the Lord. . . . . With what face can any one say, "*Lord, have respect unto thy covenant,*" when he casts his own covenant behind his back, and cannot say with the prophet David, "I have a respect to all thy commandments"? How canst thou say, "Deliver me not up to the many beasts without," when thou art not afraid to be delivered up to thy vile, bestial lusts and affections that are within? Thou hypocrite, first labour the subduing of the monsters that are within thee, then a fair way will be open to have thine enemies subdued round about thee.—*John Langley.*

Verse 20.—"*Have respect unto the covenant.*" Those persons and preachers who decline to think and speak of gospel mercies and free salvation as secured by *covenant*, deprive themselves and others of much of the blessed comforts of God's word. Such was not the manner of the inspired psalmist.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 20.—God seems to his people to neglect his covenant, when they are oppressed by ungodly men. So Asaph complains. After an acknowledgment that God was the Shepherd of Israel, and so in covenant with his people, and accordingly had wonderfully brought them out of Egypt, and made them flourish marvellously in the land of Canaan, he attributes their misery to God's neglect. Many reasons may be given of this unkind carriage of God's people to him. As, first, because their misery blinds them; and blind men when they are smitten suspect every man that comes near them. Secondly, self-love makes us suspect any rather than ourselves, yea, even God himself. The people should have reflected upon themselves that were nocent, but in their sorrows they reflect upon God that was innocent. We are all Adam and Eve's children. When Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit, she tacitly lays the fault upon God: "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." Gen. iii. 13. Hadst thou not made a subtil serpent I had not broken thy commandment. Adam lays it openly upon God: "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." Gen. iii. 12. Hadst thou not given me such a companion to betray me, I had been innocent. So we their posterity, when trouble is upon us, suspect God's breaking covenant, rather than our own. Thus our nurses

beat the stone when children stumble through their own neglect. Thirdly, in time of need we most commonly suspect such as are best able to help us. The sick man, if he be in danger of death, suspects not his ignorant neighbours, but his skilful physician. He that is oppressed in his estate, when the sentence goes against him, suspects none more than the advocate, or the judge. We know God is best able to help us; our corruption, therefore, makes us to suspect him most, if our troubles continue. Fourthly, we most suspect those who, as we think, have most reason to help us in our miseries, and do it not. If the servant want meal or apparel, he complains not of his fellow servants but of his master, who is tied by covenant to provide for him; if the child be wronged by the servants, he lays not the fault upon his brethren but upon his father, who by bands of nature is obliged to take care of him. So we, being in covenant with God, wonder not much if others fail us, but complain heavily if God seems to neglect us.—*Francis Taylor.*

Verse 20.—The psalmist moves God in prayer to look to his covenant by this argument: "*For the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty;*" that is, of cruel men, or of men so full of cruelty, that they deserve rather to be called *cruelty* than cruel: this sort of men inhabit and fill up all those places where the light of holy truth doth not shine. Now, if they who want the light, or have no true knowledge of God among them, are hereby prepared for the acting of all manner of wickedness, how much more are they prepared for the acting of any wickedness who have thrust the light from them, and are in dark places of their own making? The prophet Hosea shews (ch. iv. 1), that where there is no knowledge of God in a land, for want of means, there is no truth nor mercy (that is, there is none exercised) in that land, but oppression, deceit, and falsehood bear down all: how much more must it be so where there is no knowledge of God in a land, because of the contempt of means, and rebellion against the light? What wickedness will not they do in the dark, who put out the candle that they may not see what they do?—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 20 (*second clause*).—This might have some literal meaning. "*The dark places of the earth,*" some have thought, may here describe in the first instance, the caves, the dens, and the woods of the land; for there are many such (as travellers testify) in the land of Judæa, and in unsettled times they have often been the abodes of robbers and murderers, who have thence sallied forth to molest and cut off the traveller, to ravish peaceful villages, to waylay and plunder the merchant, to commit all sorts of crimes, and then to return in impunity to these their dark retreats, where they laugh at all law, human or divine; they quaff, with horrid pleasure, the recollection of the widow's tears, and listen with inhuman joy to the echoing remembrance of the orphan's moan and the dying father's shriek. But what a land thus infested would be, is but a faint image of the heathen world. Wherever heathenism spreads itself, there are "*the dark places of the earth.*" The Scripture often tells us that.—*John Hambleton.* 1839.

Verse 20.—"*The dark places.*" An allusion, as some interpreters conceive, to the dens of wild beasts, wherein they hide themselves to seize upon their prey, Psalm civ. 21, 22. To these cruel men are compared. Psalm x. 8, 9. "He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent. He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor." Such places oppressors and robbers choose. Others take it for an allusion to prisons and dark dungeons void of light. As the prophet, Isaiah xlii. 7, describes a prison: "To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." So trouble in Scripture is compared to darkness, and prosperity to light; because darkness is irksome, and light comfortable: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light;" and then the sorry hiding-places whither God's people went to hide themselves are here meant. Yet, could they not there be quiet, but were pursued, found out, and spoiled by their adversaries. Others take

"*dark places*" for obscure and mean places, as *dark men*, in the original, are called *mean men* in our translation, Prov. xxii. 29. And then it may either signify that the meanest men did oppress God's people, or, that the poorest and meanest of God's people were not spared. Such usage have we found in our time, when the poor cottages of our foes have sent out pillagers, and no cottagers of ours have escaped spoiling in divers places.—*Francis Taylor.*

Verse 20.—"*Cruelty.*" Heathenism is cruel. It is not changed in character since the days when parents made their children to pass through fire to Moloch. At this very day, for instance, infanticide prevails in China; and the "law," says a book of authority—"the law, otherwise so rigorous, does not take the slightest cognisance of that crime, nor ever subjects those guilty of it to punishment. Every morning before it is light, waggons traverse the different quarters of the city of Pekin to receive the dead infants." Well may they go "before it is light;" "the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." "The missionaries of that city obtained details, which justify belief that the number of infants (chiefly females) destroyed there is upwards of three thousand annually." Think of this same proportion, extended throughout that densely-peopled empire. Among the same people, suicide is also of frequent occurrence. What a contrast with the religion which stays the rash hand, and calls out, "Do thyself no harm!"

We might pass to India; and there the flames of the funeral piles, on which so many widows were annually burnt, had hardly expired, when we were shocked, only a few years since, with other proofs of the cruelty of heathenism. What painful details were those, which our government brought to light respecting the secret murderers of India! What think you of a vast fraternity of murderers, consisting of many thousands of persons, which has existed from generation to generation, which has been ramified over the whole country from Cape Comorin to the Himalaya mountains, which has flourished alike under Hindoo, Mahometan, and British rulers, and which has every year destroyed multitudes of victims—and all this under the sanction of religion? The murderous system, they say, has been enjoined them by the goddess Kalee, who is represented as having made a grant of half the human race to her votaries, (to be murdered, that is,) according to certain prescribed forms.—*John Hambleton.*

Verse 23.—If we are compelled to close our most solemn and urgent devotions, and our most earnest supplications, without seeing one ray of light beaming upon our path, it may comfort us to remember that so the pious psalmist closed this complaint. To hope against hope is the most blessed kind of hope.—*William S. Plumer.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—I. The divine displeasure a fact. II. It is but in measure, and we are very liable to exaggerate it. III. Even while it lasts our relation to him is unaffected: "Sheep of thy pasture." IV. Our business is to enquire the reason of it, and act accordingly.

Verse 1 (*second clause*).—The Lord's anger with his people compared to smoke.—I. It is not a consuming fire. II. It suggests fear of the fire. III. It darkens the light of joy. IV. It blinds the eyes of faith. V. It checks the breath of life. VI. It blackens the beauty of our worldly comforts.

Verse 2.—I. The Lord's relation to his people. 1. Election. 2. Redemption. 3. Indwelling. II. The prayer arising from it: "Remember."

Verse 3.—Church mischief. I. The church has enemies. II. Wickedness in the church is their great weapon. III. This causes much desolation to weak saints, to enquirers, to peace, to prayer, to usefulness. IV. The cure for it is God's interposition.

Verses 3, 4.—The power of prayer. I. On one side were, 1. Desolation: "perpetual," etc. 2. Desecration. 3. Declamation: "enemies roar." 4. Demonstration: "they set up." II. On the other side is, 1. Supplication. 2. This brings God to the rescue effectually and quickly.

Verse 4.—"*Ensigns for signs.*" The craft of Satan in supplanting truth with deceptive counterfeits.

Verse 5.—True fame. To build for God with labour, daring, diligence, skill, etc.

Verse 6.—Vandal work against the truth of God.

Verses 6, 7.—Things feared by a church. I. Injury to her doctrines or ordinances: "carved work." II. The fire of strife, division, etc. III. The defilement of sin. Either of these three will throw a church down; let her guard and pray against them.

Verse 8.—The destruction of rural churches, the aim of our enemies: the injury they would so do, and our duty to prevent it: the means the destroyers use: bribery, oppression, etc. Our proper method for sustaining such churches.

Verse 9 (*first clause*).—I. There are such things as "*signs*," that is, tokens and marks of God's special favour to the soul. II. There is also "*a seeing*" those signs, when God, the Holy Ghost, is pleased to shine upon them. III. There is a third state, where there is *not seeing the signs*, those signs being enveloped in darkness, dimness, and obscurity.—*J. C. Philpot.*

Verse 9.—Teacheth us, that evident signs of God's wrath and displeasure, as the want of his word, the stopping of the true ministers' mouths, etc., should touch us to the quick.—*T. Wilcocks.*

Verse 10.—A prayer for revival. I. How God is reproached. II. What are the ill effects of it. III. When we may expect him to arise.

Verse 11.—I. The patience of God with man: He 'withdraws his hand, even,' etc., he hesitates to strike. II. The impatience of man with God: "pluck it," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 12.—I. The sovereignty of God. II. Its antiquity. III. Our loyalty to it. IV. The practical character of his reign: "working." V. The graciousness of it: "working salvation." VI. The place of its operation: "in the midst of the earth."

Verse 14.—God's defeat of our enemies, and the benefit accruing to ourselves.

Verse 15.—The wonderful nature of gracious supplies, illustrated by the smitten rock.

Verse 16.—God present alike in all dispensations of providence.

Verses 16, 17.—I. The God of grace is the God of nature: "The day is thine," etc. II. The God of nature is the God of grace: the wisdom, the power, the faithfulness the same. See Psalm xix.—*G. R.*

Verse 19.—The soul of the believer compared to a turtledove.

Verse 20.—The title given to heathen nations: "dark places of the earth." Not without the light of nature, or of reason, or of natural conscience, or of philosophy, as of Greece and Rome; but without the light of revelation. II. Their condition: "full of," etc: cruelty in their public, social, and private relationships. See Rom. i.: "without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful." III. Their part in the covenant. This is known from their part in its promises, and in prophecies: "I will give thee the heathen," etc. IV. The prayer of others on their behalf: "Have respect," etc.; "Oh send forth thy light," etc. The conversion of the world will be in answer to the prayers of the church.—*G. R.*

Verse 22.—God pleading his own cause in providential visitations of nations and individuals, as also in remarkable conversions and awakenings.

Verse 22.—I. The glory of our cause: it is the Lord's own. II. The hope of our cause: he will plead it himself. III. The hope thus derivable from the violence of man: it will move the Lord to arise.

PSALM LXXV.

TITLE.—To the chief Musician. *Here is noble work for him, for the cry of the last Psalm is about to be heard, and the challenge of the foes of Israel taken up by God himself. Here the virgin daughter of Zion despises her foe, and laughs him to scorn. The destruction of Sennacherib's army is a notable illustration of this sacred song.* Al-taschith. *Here is another of the "destroy not" Psalms, and the title may be intended as a check upon the natural fierceness of the oppressed, or a taunt for the savage foe, who is here bitterly bidden to destroy not, because the nation is well aware that he cannot. Here, in holy faith, the sucking child plays at the hole of the asp, and the weaned child puts his hand on the cockatrice den.* A Psalm *or* Song of Asaph. *For reading or singing. A hymn to God and a song for his saints. Happy were the people who having found a Milton in David had an almost equal songster in Asaph; happiest of all, because these poets were not inspired by earth's Castalian fount, but drank of "the fount of every blessing."*

DIVISION.—*The people's song of gratitude and adoration begins the hymn in verse* 1. *In the next four verses* 2—5, *the Lord reveals himself as ruling the world in righteousness. Then follows a warning voice from the church to her enemies, verses* 6—8, *and a closing song anticipatory of the glory due to God and the utter defeat of the foe.*

EXPOSITION.

UNTO thee, O God, do we give thanks, *unto thee* do we give thanks: for *that* thy name is near thy wondrous works declare.

1. "*Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks.*" Not to ourselves for we were helpless, but to Elohim who heard our cry, and replied to the taunt of our foes. Never let us neglect thanksgiving, or we may fear that another time our prayers will remain unanswered. As the smiling flowers gratefully reflect in their lovely colours the various constituents of the solar ray, so should gratitude spring up in our hearts after the smiles of God's providence. "*Unto thee do we give thanks.*" We should praise God again and again. Stinted gratitude is ingratitude. For infinite goodness there should be measureless thanks. Faith promises redoubled praise for greatly needed and signal deliverances. "*For that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare.*" God is at hand to answer and do wonders—adore we then the present Deity. We sing not of a hidden God, who sleeps and leaves the church to her fate, but of one who ever in our darkest days is most near, a very present help in trouble, "Near is his name." Baal is on a journey, but Jehovah dwells in his church. Glory be unto the Lord, whose perpetual deeds of grace and majesty are the sure tokens of his being with us always, even unto the end of the world.

2 When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly.
3 The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.
4 I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly: and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn.
5 Lift not up your horn on high: speak *not with* a stiff neck.

2. "*When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly.*" This is generally believed to be the voice of God, who will, when he accepts his people,

mount his judgment seat and avenge their cause in righteousness. It is rendered by some, "I will take a set time;" and by others, "I will seize the moment."

> "God never is before his time,
> He never is too late."

He determines the period of interposition, and when that arrives swift are his blows and sure are his deliverances. God sends no delegated judge, but sits himself upon the throne. O Lord, let thy set time come for grace. Tarry no longer, but for the truth and the throne of Jesus be thou speedily at work. Let the appointed assize come, O Jesus, and sit thou on thy throne to judge the world in equity.

3. "*The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved.*" When anarchy is abroad, and tyrants are in power, everything is unloosed, dissolution threatens all things, the solid mountains of government melt as wax; but even then the Lord upholds and sustains the right. "*I bear up the pillars of it.*" Hence, there is no real cause for fear. While the pillars stand, and stand they must for God upholds them, the house will brave out the storm. In the day of the Lord's appearing a general melting will take place, but in that day our covenant God will be the sure support of our confidence.

> "How can I sink with such a prop
> As my eternal God,
> Who bears the earth's huge pillars up,
> And spreads the heavens abroad."

"*Selah.*" Here may the music pause while the sublime vision passes before our view; a world dissolved and an immutable God uplifting all his people above the terrible commotion.

4. "*I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly.*" The Lord bids the boasters boast not, and commands the mad oppressors to stay their folly. How calm is he, how quiet are his words, yet how divine the rebuke. If the wicked were not insane, they would even now hear in their consciences the still small voice bidding them cease from evil, and forbear their pride. "*And to the wicked, Lift not up the horn.*" He bids the ungodly stay their haughtiness. The horn was the emblem of boastful power; only the foolish, like wild and savage beasts, will lift it high; but they assail heaven itself with it, as if they would gore the Almighty himself. In dignified majesty he rebukes the inane glories of the wicked, who beyond measure exalt themselves in the day of their fancied power.

5. "*Lift not up your horn on high.*" For their abounding pride there is a double rebuke. A word from God soon abases the lofty. Would to God that all proud men would obey the word here given them; for, if they do not, he will take effectual means to secure obedience, and then woe will come upon them, such as shall break their horns and roll their glory in the mire for ever. "*Speak not with a stiff neck.*" Impudence before God is madness. The outstretched neck of insolent pride is sure to provoke his axe. Those who carry their heads high shall find that they will be lifted yet higher, as Haman was upon the gallows which he had prepared for the righteous man. Silence, thou silly boaster! Silence! or God will answer thee. Who art thou, thou worm, that thou shouldst arrogantly object against thy Maker's laws and cavil at his truth? Be hushed, thou vainglorious prater, or vengeance shall silence thee to thine eternal confusion.

6 For promotion *cometh* neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.

7 But God *is* the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

8 For in the hand of the LORD *there is* a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring *them* out, *and* drink *them*.

6. "*For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.*" There is a God, and a providence, and things happen not by chance. Though deliverance be hopeless from all points of the compass, yet God can work it for his people; and though judgment come neither from the rising or the setting of the sun, nor from the wilderness of mountains, yet come it will, for the Lord reigneth. Men forget that all things are ordained in heaven; they see but the human force, and the carnal passion, but the unseen Lord is more real far than these. He is at work behind and within the cloud. The foolish dream that he is not, but he is near even now, and on the way to bring in his hand that cup of spiced wine of vengeance, one draught of which shall stagger all his foes.

7. "*But God is the judge.*" Even now he is actually judging. His seat is not vacant; his authority is not abdicated; the Lord reigneth evermore. "*He putteth down one, and setteth up another.*" Empires rise and fall at his bidding. A dungeon here, and there a throne, his will assigns. Assyria yields to Babylon, and Babylon to the Medes. Kings are but puppets in his hand; they serve his purpose when they rise and when they fall. A certain author has issued a work called "Historic Ninepins,"* a fit name of scorn for all the great ones of the earth. God only is; all power belongs to him; all else is shadow, coming and going, unsubstantial, misty, dream-like.

8. "*For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup.*" The punishment of the wicked is prepared, God himself holds it in readiness; he has collected and concocted woes most dread, and in the chalice of his wrath he holds it. They scoffed his feast of love; they shall be dragged to his table of justice, and made to drink their due deserts. "*And the wine is red.*" The retribution is terrible, it is blood for blood, foaming vengeance for foaming malice. The very colour of divine wrath is terrible; what must the taste be? "*It is full of mixture.*" Spices of anger, justice, and incensed mercy are there. Their misdeeds, their blasphemies, their persecutions have strengthened the liquor as with potent drugs:

> "Mingled, strong, and mantling high;
> Behold the wrath divine."

Ten thousand woes are burning in the depths of that fiery cup, which to the brim is filled with indignation. "*And he poureth out of the same.*" The full cup must be quaffed, the wicked cannot refuse the terrible draught, for God himself pours it out for them and into them. Vain are their cries and entreaties. They could once defy him, but that hour is over, and the time to requite them is fully come. "*But the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.*" Even to the bitter end must wrath proceed. They must drink on and on for ever, even to the bottom where lie the lees of deep damnation; these they must suck up, and still must they drain the cup. Oh the anguish and the heart-break of the day of wrath! Mark well, it is for all the wicked; all hell for all the ungodly; the dregs for the dregs; bitters for the bitter; wrath for the heirs of wrath. Righteousness is conspicuous, but over all terror spreads a tenfold night, cheerless, without a star. Oh happy they who drink the cup of godly sorrow, and the cup of salvation; these, though now despised, will then be envied by the very men who trod them under foot.

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* Timbs.

9 But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

10 All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; *but* the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

9. "*But I will declare for ever.*" Thus will the saints occupy themselves with rehearsing Jehovah's praises, while their foes are drunken with the wrath-wine. They shall chant while the others roar in anguish, and justly so, for the former Psalm informed us that such had been the case on earth,—"thine enemies roar in the sanctuary,"—the place where the chosen praised the Lord. "*I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.*" The covenant God, who delivered Jacob from a thousand afflictions, our soul shall magnify. He has kept his covenant which he made with the patriarch, and has redeemed his seed, therefore will we spread abroad his fame world without end.

10. "*All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off.*" Power and liberty being restored to Israel, she begins again to execute justice, by abasing the godless who had gloried in the reign of oppression. Their power and pomp are to be smitten down. Men wore horns in those days as a part of their state, and these, both literally and figuratively, were to be lopped off; for since God abhors the proud, his church will not tolerate them any longer. "*But the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.*" In a rightly ordered society, good men are counted great men, virtue confers true rank, and grace is more esteemed than gold. Being saved from unrighteous domination, the chief among the chosen people here promises to rectify the errors which had crept into the commonwealth, and after the example of the Lord himself, to abase the haughty and elevate the humble.

This memorable ode may be sung in times of great depression, when prayer has performed her errand at the mercy-seat, and when faith is watching for speedy deliverance. It is a song of the second advent, CONCERNING THE NEARNESS OF THE JUDGE WITH THE CUP OF WRATH.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Title.—"*Al-taschith.*" *Destroy not.* This seems to have been used by David as a maxim during the violent persecutions of Saul, as if to remind himself to forbear revenge, though it was often in his power to inflict it, upon his unnatural enemy.—*F. G. Hubbard, in "The Psalms Chronologically arranged, with Historical Introductions. New York."* [1856.]

Whole Psalm.—As these words are really a prayer, while at the same time the Psalm is thrown into the form, not of petitions, but of a thanksgiving, it ought to be considered as a thank-prayer, uttered beforehand, and containing petitions within it.—*Berleb. Bible.*

Verse 1.—"*Thy name is near.*" The *name of God* is said to be *near*, because it had come into public notice, and was in every mind and every tongue—opposed to what is *unknown* and *obscure*, which is said to be far remote. Compare Deut. xxx. 11.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 1.—The psalmist doubles this duty in the practice of the saints; "*Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, we give thanks,*" we do it, we do it; as if none else did it but they, or as if they had done nothing else.—*Joseph Caryl, in "A Sermon before the House of Commons," entitled, "The Saints' Thankfull Acclamation."*

Verse 3.—"*I bear up the pillars of it.*" I prevent it from falling to pieces, as

a house, supported by columns too weak to bear its weight, would do.—*Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 3.—"*I bear up the pillars of it.*" Learn to whom the glory of bearing up the world is due. God's providence is the true Atlas which supports the world, and doth shoulder up the world, whilst it treads on sin and sinners. Upon a serious view taken of providence on this wise displayed, we may say as they said of old, "The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God," 1 Kings xviii. 39.—*Thomas Crane.*

Verse 3.—We can imagine a monarch, and especially an eastern monarch, in the plenitude of his power, and the arrogance of his pride, as he casts his haughty glance over the ensigns of his might, saying to himself, "I bear up the pillars of the earth." But one could never imagine such a thought arising in the heart, or proceeding from the lips of David or Hezekiah. I know not who of the sons of Adam, frail and feeble at their best estate, could have ever said, "*The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it.*" I know of none but him who said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," and who, as he said these words, ascended up into heaven to exercise that sovereignty, and repair that mighty ruin which had been wrought on earth when Satan triumphed in Paradise.—*Barton Bouchier.*

Verse 4.—"*Fools.*" The ungodly are spiritual fools. If one had a child very beautiful, yet if he were a fool, the parent would have little joy in him The Scripture hath dressed the sinner in a fool's coat: and let me tell you, better be a fool void of reason, than a fool void of grace: this is the devil's fool. Prov. xiv. 9. Is not he a fool who refuseth a rich portion? God offers Christ and salvation, but the sinner refuseth this portion: "Israel would none of me." Ps. lxxxi. 11. Is not he a fool who preferreth an annuity before an inheritance? Is not he a fool who tends his mortal part, and neglects his angelical part? As if one should paint the wall of his house, and let the timber rot. Is not he a fool who will feed the devil with his soul? As that emperor who fed his lion with a pheasant. Is not he a fool who lays a snare for himself? Prov. i. 18. Who consults his own shame? Hab. ii. 10. Who loves death? Prov. viii. 36.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 5.—"*Horn.*" The word *horn* was used in the Hebrew metaphorically to express either *honour*, as Ps. cxii. 9; cxxxii. 18, etc.; or *strength*, Mic. iv. 13, "I will make thine horn iron." Deut. xxxiii. 17, etc. To humble and cast down was often represented by the figure of breaking or cutting off the horn, as here (ver. 10). Lam. ii. 3, "Cut off all the horn of Israel." To exalt the horn of any one was to bestow honour and dignity upon him; so also, to make it bud. Ps. cxxxii. 17, lxxxix, 18; Ezek. xxix. 21. Here, *to lift up the horn* betokens presumption. It was also somewhat later a symbol for kingdom, Zech. i. 18, and Daniel.—"*Four Friends.*"

Verse 5.—"*Speak not with a stiff neck.*" Mr. Bruce has observed that the Abyssinian kings have a *horn* on their *diadem;* and that the keeping it erect, or in a projecting form, makes them appear as if they had a *stiff neck;* and refers to this passage for the antiquity of the usage, and the *appearance* also.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 6.—"*For promotion cometh neither from the east,*" etc. The word "*promotion*" here is used in a very expressive way; it means the *desire of self-advancement*, הָרִים (*harim*), and would teach us that all our inward schemes, and outward plans, cannot gain for us advancement, unless based upon the fear and love of God; we look forward to improve our circumstances, like to the ascending of a mountain, and nerve ourselves to the effort of ascent, fondly thinking that no eye watches our efforts; but as "shame is the promotion of fools," so disappointment is often the return of rashness. . . . . From the *east* promotion doth not come; the word "*east*" here is very expressive, מִמּוֹצָא (*mimmotza*), the rising of the sun, the outgoing of light, the dawning of the

day, and the manifesting or revealing of God. We look around; and in the early dawning of youth, with high hopes, mental energies, and perhaps superior talents, anticipate victory over our compeers, and a course of worldly success and prosperity; but alas! how often are all these hopes blighted and a succession of reverses humbles our spirits.

Promotion cometh not from the "*west*." The original is וּמִמַּעֲרָב (*umimmaqnarab*) and it means duskiness, darkness, and the setting sun,—hence the west. When the clouds of years press upon us, and darkened shadows overtake us in various ways, such as loss of dear and early friends, the buoyancy of youth gone by, hopes softened down to personal ease, and the power of the constitution reduced; then God often wills that promotion shall not come.

We now approach to the last point from whence promotion cometh not, that is from the "*south*," מִדְבָּר (*midbar*) a waste place, the Arabian desert; hence the south. In dry and solitary places like the sandy desert little advancement can be looked for; like the human intellect, unless cultivated and improved by care and education it is barren as the desert to all holy feelings and improvement, the natural passions like *sand* choke up every patch susceptible of cultivation, and close up all the avenues to thought and devotion. A godless man is like the Arabian desert, of no profit to himself or his neighbours; like ever-shifting sands being tossed to and fro by his own wayward passions; heated with the suns of turbulence, self-will, and recklessness, he is a desert, a waste where God will not vouchsafe the light of his countenance for promotion. Like the disobedient Jews of old. Psalm lxxviii. 49, we may speak of this man saying, "How oft did he provoke him in the wilderness and grieve him in the desert!" Let us then cultivate the higher part of our being, and then we may produce fruit unto holiness; let us not wreck so noble a ship as the soul by careless steering and neglect, but trim its sails with early good instruction, and then may we arrive at the haven where we would be.

Having now illustrated the three points mentioned in our text, let us turn to the *one* (*the north*) where promotion or advancement may be looked for. Coldness is emblematical of purity, and coldness is an attribute of the north. The pure in heart shall see God. God is the northern light that gleams over the stillness of life's night. "He giveth snow like wool; he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes; he casteth forth his ice like morsels."

Be it ours to be humbly dependent upon God; for whatever station he may choose to keep us in, godliness alone will prove our promotion and true riches. If our anxieties are directed towards pleasing him, then shall we prosper, and he will shew us "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb." (Rev. xxii. 1.)—*Condensed from a Sermon by Gregory Bateman, preached March 16th, 1862, on his entering upon the Vicarage of Ulrome.*

Verse 6.—"*For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.*" Here are three of the four winds specified, and it is said, "promotion" comes from neither of them. But why is it not also said that promotion comes not from the *north?* that's the question. I answer; it were answer enough to say, that we ought not to put questions curiously about such things; it should satisfy us that the Spirit of God is pleased to say it is so, and no more. Yet some tell us, the reason why it is not said promotion cometh not from the *north*, is because indeed it cometh out of the north, which, say they, is intimated in the Hebrew word for the *north*, which signifies *hidden* or *secret*. Promotion comes not from the east, nor west, nor south, but from the *north*. It comes from the north in a figure or mystery, that is, it comes from some hidden providence, or secret hand, which many take no more notice of than we do of the furthest part of the *north*. God promotes many in this world to power, and sends them great prosperity, we see not how or which way: the causes and contrivances of it are hidden close, and in the breast of God. This also is a truth; in that sense we may say, "Fair weather cometh from the *north*." Promotion is visible, but the manner of it is a secret; we see not the

causes for which, nor the ways in which it cometh. It is enough to touch these niceties, and to touch them can do no hurt, while the matter arising from them hath the clear consent of, and is harmonious with other plain places of Scripture. —*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 6.—"*Promotion;*" or, "*lifting up.*" The word is evidently an emphatic word in the Psalm; it is the same which occurs in verses four and five, and again in verse seven and verse ten. I have, therefore, given the same rendering of it throughout. The rendering of the authorised version "*promotion,*" besides losing sight of the manifestly designed repetition of the same word, is peculiarly unfortunate in conveying a wrong idea. "*Lifting up,*" in its Hebrew sense, does not mean "*promotion,*" as we commonly understand it, but deliverance from trouble, safety, victory. The image, in particular, of lifting up the head or the horn (the last, borrowed from wild beasts, such as buffaloes, etc., in whom the horn is the symbol of strength), denotes courage, strength, and victory over enemies.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 6.—"*Nor from the south.*" "From the wilderness," the great wilderness lying in that direction. Three quarters are mentioned, the north only being omitted. This may be accounted for, supposing the Psalm to refer to Sennacherib, by the fact that the Assyrian army approached from the north; and therefore it would be natural to look in all directions but that for assistance to repel the invader.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verses 6, 7.—"I thought to promote thee to great honour," said the king of Moab to Balaam; and yet that promotion ended in a dishonoured and a bloody death. I have often thought of many of the Lord's servants on earth, so superciliously passed by and passed over in man's catalogue of worthies, with what glad and grateful surprise they will at length receive that promotion denied on earth, when their own Master shall say to them, "Friend, come up higher;" and then, as they sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, shall they have honour of them that sit at meat with them.—*Barton Bouchier.*

Verses 6—10.—The rise and fall of nations and empires are in this Psalm ascribed to God. He exalts one and puts down another at his pleasure. In this he generally uses instrumentality, but that instrumentality is always rendered effectual by his own agency. When nations or individuals are prosperous, and glorious, and powerful, they usually ascribe all to themselves or to fortune. But it is God who has raised them to eminence. When they boast he can humble them. In these verses God is considered as the governor of the world, punishing the wicked, and pouring out judgments on his enemies. The calamities of war, pestilence, and famine, are all ministers of providence to execute wrath.—*Alexander Carson.*

Verse 7.—

> "Here he exalts neglected worms
> To sceptres and a crown;
> Anon the following page he turns,
> And treads the monarch down."

—*Isaac Watts.*

Verse 8.—"*In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red* (which notes fierce wrath); *and it is full of mixture.*" This mixture is of judgments, plagues, and punishments; "this is the portion of their cup" (Ps. xi.). But what will the Lord do with this mixed cup? Who shall sip at the top of the cup he tells us not; but he is express whose the bottom is: "*he poureth out of the same*"—some drops are spilt here and there—"*but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.*" Alas, they loathe it, their stomachs turn at it; they have not been brought up to drink dregs; they have had their wine well refined, and sparkling with spirits in crystal glasses; and how can they get this down? They who have drunk so willingly

and freely of the cup of sin, shall be forced, whether they will or no, to drink the cup of judgment. And it is not a sip or two shall serve their turns; they must drink all, dregs and all, they shall drink it to the bottom, and yet they shall never come to the bottom; they have loved long draughts, and now they shall have one long enough; there is eternity to the bottom. If a cup of affliction, which, in the effect, is a cup of salvation, be sometime, or for a time, nauseous to the godly, how deadly sick will the ungodly be, who must for ever, drink a cup of wrath and death.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 8.—"*In the hand of the Lord there is a cup*," etc. It is a "*cup*:" well, there is a cup that David thirsts for: "I will take the cup of salvation." Ps. cxvi. 13. There is "*wine*" in it: better; for wine cheers the hearts, and puts alacrity into the spirits. That wine is "*red*:" better still; so it should be; this argues the lustre and goodness of it: "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup," Prov. xxiii. 31: the colour adds to the pleasure. But now it is "*full of mixture*:" alas, this mixture spoils all. It is compounded, brewed, made unwholesome: this changeth the condition of the cup, of the wine, of the colour, of all. It is mixed with the wrath of God, the malice of Satan, the anguish of soul, the gall of sin, the tears of despair: it is "*red*," that is, of a sanguine colour, the wine of blood. But yet so long as it is in the cup, they need not meddle with it: nay, but the Lord will "*pour it out*;" he shall hold their mouths to it, and make them drink it: the rankest poison in the world, the gall of dragons, and venom of asps, is pleasant and healthful to it. Yet be it but a little of the top, let them but taste it; nay, they must "*drink it off*," to the very bottom, the sediments, dregs, lees, and all; even the very filth of vengeance. And lest any drops should be left behind, they shall "*wring them out*," and suck them down to their confusion. The cup is all bitter, and full of sorrow, saith Augustine: the godly do often taste the top, and feel the bitterness, but then it is suddenly snatched from them; but the ungodly shall drink the very grounds, and extremest poison.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 8.—"*In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red*;" red with wrath, in the day of God's wrath. "*It is full of mixture*:" it hath no mixture of good, no sweetness at all in it, but all sorts of evil are mingled in that cup. "*And he poureth out of the same*;" upon many occasions he pours it out in the world; "*but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink*:" they have not only the cup, but the dregs of the cup, that is, the worst of the cup; for as in a good cup, the deeper the sweeter; so in an evil cup, the deeper the worse: the dregs are the worst, the bottom is the bitterest of a bitter cup.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 8.—"*A cup.*" There seems to be here an allusion to the *cup of malediction*, as the Jews called that "mixed cup of wine" and frankincense, which used to be given to condemned criminals before their execution, in order to take away their senses.—*Richard Mant.*

Verse 8.—"*The wine is red*," or "the wine *foameth*," *i.e.* as it is poured into the cup from the wine-jar, as is expressed in the next member of the verse. "*Mixture*," *i.e.* the aromatic herbs, &c., which were put into the wine to make it more intoxicating.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 8.—"*The wine is red.*" The remedy is suitable to the disease, and the punishment to the sin: *Sanguinem sitisti sanguinem vitis* (as he once says); Thou hast thirsted after blood, and blood thou shalt drink. Because men delight in blood, therefore blood shall be poured out unto them; yea, *their own blood* shall be poured out. This is the way of God's providence, and the manner of his dealings in the world; which because it is filled with cruelty shall be therefore filled with blood.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 8.—"*Red.*" The Hebrew word חֵמֶר rather means *turbid:* and it probably contains a further allusion to the particulars above mentioned; the wine being rendered *turbid* by stirring up the lees, and by the mixture of intoxicating drugs.—*Richard Mant.*

Verse 8.—"*Full of mixture.*" There are some who think that mixture is

here named because they rarely drink pure wine in those regions, since they are so warm; and because the wine is there more generous than in these colder quarters. But a different signification is intended; it is that spices are mingled with the wine.—*Francis Vatablus.* 1547.

Verse 8.—"*Mixture.*" In all the afflictions of God's people there's an intermixture and temperament of love and favour, which shews itself in them. As, first of all, there's a mixture of *strength and patience* for the bearing of it. Secondly, there's a mixture of *comfort and goodness* as to the things themselves. God is not altogether in affliction, but he is very much in mercy with it; and as he is pleased to exercise his servants with several troubles, so he does likewise vouchsafe them many blessings together with them, which he does comfort them withal. And then, thirdly, there's another thing also which is much observable in the afflictions of God's people, which makes this mixture complete, and that is, a mixture of *improvement and edification.*—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 8.—"*The dregs.*"* Now, as the cup of red wine is the Christian doctrine which converts the soul, and in which the true believer spiritually luxuriates, so "*the dregs thereof*" are those merely outward, formal, and ceremonious circumstancials, which are nothing in themselves more than the dregs and leavings of the signified reality and spiritual substance. And when the text says that the wicked shall wring out the dregs of Christian doctrine, and shall drink of them, we are led to fix our attention upon the main peculiarity of Pharisaical religion. As God satisfies his people with the true spiritual refreshment of genuine Christian doctrine; so does he leave to the unenlightened spirit, who will not seek him as he ought to do, the mere outside formalities, which belong indeed to religion necessarily, but of it form no vital part. They are but the refuse of the magnificent heaven-realising substance.—*T. D. Gregg.* 1855.

Verse 8.—"*All the wicked.*" They shall *all* do it too, we may not omit that: "*all* the wicked of the earth." As there's an universality of the *judgment*, so there's universality of the sufferers; they shall drink *all* of it, and they shall *all* of them drink it, that so no man may favour or flatter himself with hope of escape.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 8.—"*Shall wring them out.*" Here's the necessity also of it; it is *unavoidable*; "*They shall drink it,*" that is, even against their minds, whether they will or no. It is very likely that wicked men would be very loath to come to this condition: they can be content to sin, but they cannot endure to be punished for sin. . . . . This cup shall not pass from them, but they shall drink of it, even against their stomachs, where they never so much loath it. Yea, and which is more, they shall suck it up; God will turn the cup up to them, and will make them to take it every jot; he will not spare them one drop of it, which they shall be suffered to leave behind. . . . . The Lord himself (as I may say) will stand over them, and see them do it without any favour or indulgence. —*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 8.—When God's people have drunk the red wine in the cup, the wicked must drink the dregs: the cup passeth from place to place till all be drank off.—*William Greenhill.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

***Verse* 1.**—The unceasing thanksgiving of the church, her grand cause for adoration: the nearness of her God, and the evident proof thereof in the displays of his power.

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* We quote this for its singularity rather than its value. It is a notable instance of the force of party zeal. Thus the Evangelical Anglican, in his ardour against Ritualistic errors, finds aid in a passage which would not ordinarily be understood to relate to the question. Any stick is good enough to beat a dog with.

Verse 1.—I. Do we give thanks? II. We do give thanks. III. What thanks do we give? IV. When do we give thanks? V. Let us give thanks again.

Verse 2.—Good resolutions commendable, how they should be made, strengthened, and performed.

Verse 3.—The Lord the stay of his people under the worst circumstances.

Verse 3.—Teacheth us that no disorder or confusion should hinder us from doing that which God requireth of us; nay, rather, the more things are out of order the more readily should we labour to redress them.—*Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 4.—I. Who spoke to them? "I." II. Who were they? "Fools," "wicked." III. What did you say? IV. What was the good of it? Or, Rebuke of sin, a duty.

Verse 4.—The unhallowed trio:—wickedness, folly, pride.

Verse 5.—Arguments against pride in heart, appearance, and speech.

Verses 6, 7.—The changes of providence not the tricks of fortune.

Verse 7.—God acts as a judge and not arbitrarily in his providential arrangements.

Verse 8.—"*In the hand of the Lord there is a cup*," etc. I. As to matter of *preparation*, consider it so, and thus it is "in the hand of the Lord." II. By way of *qualification*: it is he that tempers it; it was "full of mixture." III. By way of *distribution*, as giving to every one his share and portion in it.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 8.—The cup of wrath. Where it is, what it is, how full it is, who brings it, who must drink it.

Verse 8.—"Full of mixture." Wrath of God, remorse, memory of lost joy, fear of future, recriminations, despair, shame, etc., all these are ingredients of the mingled cup.

Verse 8 (*last clause*).—I. "The dregs" of the cup: the wrath of wrath, the gall of bitterness. II. The dregs of the people: "all the wicked."

Verse 9.—Our life work: to declare and to sing.

PSALM LXXVI.

TITLE.—To the chief Musician on Neginoth. *The Precentor is here instructed to perform this song to the music of stringed instruments. The Master of the harpers was called upon for his most skilful minstrelsy, and truly the song is worthy of the sweetest sounds that strings can yield.* A Psalm *or* Song of Asaph. *The style and matter indicate the same hand as that which wrote the preceding; and it is an admirable arrangement which placed the two in juxtaposition. Faith in the 75th Psalm sung of victories to come, and here it sings of triumphs achieved. The present Psalm is a most jubilant war song, a pæan to the King of kings, the hymn of a theocratic nation to its divine ruler. We have no need to mark divisions in a song where the unity is so well preserved.*

EXPOSITION.

IN Judah *is* God known: his name *is* great in Israel.

2 In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion.

3 There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah.

4 Thou *art* more glorious *and* excellent than the mountains of prey.

5 The stouthearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands.

6 At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.

7 Thou, *even* thou, *art* to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?

8 Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still.

9 When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah.

10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

11 Vow, and pay unto the LORD your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.

12 He shall cut off the spirit of princes: *he is* terrible to the kings of the earth.

1. "*In Judah is God known.*" If unknown in all the world beside, he has so revealed himself to his people by his deeds of grace, that he is no unknown God to them. "*His name is great in Israel.*" To be known, in the Lord's case, is to be honoured: those who know his name admire the greatness of it. Although Judah and Israel were unhappily divided politically, yet the godly of both nations were agreed concerning Jehovah their God; and truly whatever schisms may mar the visible church, the saints always "appear as one" in magnifying the Lord their God. Dark is the outer world, but within the favoured circle Jehovah is revealed, and in the adoration of all who behold him. The world knows him

news and therefore blasphemes him, but his church is full of ardour to proclaim his fame unto the ends of the earth.

2. "*In Salem also is his tabernacle.*" In the peaceful city he dwells, and the peace is perpetuated, because there his sacred tent is pitched. The church of God is the place where the Lord abides and he is to her the Lord and giver of peace. "*And his dwelling place in Zion.*" Upon the chosen hill was the palace of Israel's Lord. It is the glory of the church that the Redeemer inhabits her by his Holy Spirit. Vain are the assaults of the enemy, for they attack not us alone, but the Lord himself. Immanuel, God with us, finds a home among his people, who then shall work us ill?

3. "*There brake he the arrows of the bow.*" Without leaving his tranquil abode, he sent forth his word and snapped the arrows of his enemies before they could shoot them. The idea is sublime, and marks the ease, completeness, and rapidity of the divine action. "*The shield, and the sword, and the battle.*" Every weapon, offensive and defensive, the Lord dashed in pieces; death-bearing bolts and life-preserving armour were alike of no avail when the Breaker sent forth his word of power. In the spiritual conflicts of this and every age, the like will be seen; no weapon that is formed against the church shall prosper, and every tongue that rises against her in judgment she shall condemn. "*Selah.*" It is meet that we should dwell on so soul-stirring a theme, and give the Lord our grateful adoration,—hence a pause is inserted.

4. "*Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.*" Far more is Jehovah to be extolled than all the invading powers which sought to oppress his people, though they were for power and greatness comparable to mountains. Assyria had pillaged the nations till it had become rich with mountains of spoil, this was talked of among men as glory, but the psalmist despises such renown, and declares that the Lord was far more illustrious. What are the honours of war but brags of murder? What the fame of conquerors but the reek of manslaughter? But the Lord is glorious in holiness, and his terrible deeds are done in justice for the defence of the weak and the deliverance of the enslaved. Mere power may be glorious, but it is not excellent: when we behold the mighty acts of the Lord, we see a perfect blending of the two qualities.

5. "*The stouthearted are spoiled.*" They came to spoil, and lo! they are spoiled themselves. Their stouthearts are cold in death, the angel of the pestilence has dried up their life-blood, their very heart is taken from them. "*They have slept their sleep.*" Their last sleep—the sleep of death. "*And none of the men of might have found their hands.*" Their arms are palsied, they cannot lift a finger, for the rigor of death has stiffened them. What a scene was that when Sennacherib's host was utterly destroyed in one night. The hands which were furious to pull down Jerusalem, could not even be raised from the sod, the most valiant warriors were as weak as the palsied cripples at the temple gate, yea, their eyes they could not open, a deep sleep sealed their vision in everlasting darkness. O God, how terrible art thou! Thus shalt thou fight for us, and in the hour of peril overthrow the enemies of thy gospel. Therefore in thee will we trust and not be afraid.

6. "*At thy rebuke.*" A word accomplished all, there was no need of a single blow. "*O God of Jacob.*" God of thy wrestling people, who again like their father supplant their enemy; God of the covenant and the promise, thou hast in this gracious character fought for thine elect nation. "*Both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.*" They will neither neigh nor rattle again; still are the trampings of the horses and the crash of the cars; the cavalry no more creates its din. The Israelites always had a special fear of horses and scythed chariots; and, therefore, the sudden stillness of the entire force of the enemy in this department is made the theme of special rejoicing. The horses were stretched on the ground, and the chariots stood still, as if the whole camp had fallen asleep. Thus can the Lord send a judicial sleep over the enemies of the church, a premonition of the second death, and this he can do when they

are in the zenith of power; and, as they imagine, in the very act of blotting out the remembrance of his people. The world's Rabshakahs can write terrible letters, but the Lord answers not with pen and ink, but with rebukes, which bear death in every syllable.

7. "*Thou, even thou, art to be feared.*" Not Sennacherib, nor Nisroch his god, but Jehovah alone, who with a silent rebuke had withered all the monarch's host.

> "Fear him, ye saints, and then ye shall
> Have nothing else to fear."

The fear of man is a snare, but the fear of God is a great virtue, and has great power for good over the human mind. God is to be feared profoundly, continually, and alone. Let all worship be to him only. "*And who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?*" Who indeed? The angels fell when their rebellion provoked his justice; Adam lost his place in Paradise in the same manner; Pharaoh and other proud monarchs passed away at his frown; neither is there in earth or hell any who can abide the terror of his wrath. How blest are they who are sheltered in the atonement of Jesus, and hence have no cause to fear the righteous anger of the Judge of all the earth.

8. "*Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven.*" So complete an overthrow was evidently a judgment from heaven; those who saw it not, yet heard the report of it, and said, "This is the finger of God." Man will not hear God's voice if he can help it, but God takes care to cause it to be heard. The echoes of that judgment executed on the haughty Assyrian are heard still, and will ring on adown all the ages, to the praise of divine justice. "*The earth feared, and was still.*" All nations trembled at the tidings, and sat in humbled awe. Repose followed the former turmoils of war, when the oppressor's power was broken, and God was reverenced for having given quiet to the peoples. How readily can Jehovah command an audience! It may be that in the latter days he will, by some such miracles of power in the realms of grace, constrain all earth's inhabitants to attend to the gospel, and submit to the reign of his all-glorious Son. So be it, good Lord.

9. "*When God arose to judgment.*" Men were hushed when he ascended the judgment-seat and actively carried out the decrees of justice. When God is still the people are in tumult; when he arises they are still as a stone. "*To save all the meek of the earth.*" The Ruler of men has a special eye towards the poor and despised; he makes it his first point to right all their wrongs. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." They have little enough of it now, but their avenger is strong and he will surely save them. He who saves his people is the same God who overthrew their enemies; he is as omnipotent to save as to destroy. Glory be unto his name. "*Selah.*" Here pause, and let devout contemplations adore the God of Jacob.

10. "*Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee.*" It shall not only be overcome but rendered subservient to thy glory. Man with his breath of threatening is but blowing the trumpet of the Lord's eternal fame. Furious winds often drive vessels the more swiftly into port. The devil blows the fire and melts the iron, and then the Lord fashions it for his own purposes. Let men and devils rage as they may, they cannot do otherwise than subserve the divine purposes. "*The remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain*" Malice is tethered and cannot break its bounds. The fire which cannot be utilised shall be damped. Some read it "thou shalt gird," as if the Lord girded on the wrath of man as a sword to be used for his own designs, and certainly men of the world are often a sword in the hand of God, to scourge others. The verse clearly teaches that even the most rampant evil is under the control of the Lord, and will in the end be overruled for his praise.

11. "*Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God.*" Well may we do so in memory of such mercies and judgments. To vow or not is a matter of choice, but to discharge our vows is our bounden duty. He who would defraud God, his own God, is a wretch indeed. He keeps his promises, let not his people fail in

theirs. He is their faithful God and deserves to have a faithful people. "*Let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be fearea.*" Let surrounding nations submit to the only living God, let his own people with alacrity present their offerings, and let his priests and Levites be leaders in the sacred sacrifice. He who deserves to be praised as our God does, should not have mere verbal homage, but substantial tribute. Dread Sovereign, behold I give myself to thee.

12. "*He shall cut off the spirit of princes.*" Their courage, skill, and life are in his hands, and he can remove them as a gardener cuts off a slip from a plant None are great in his hand. Cæsars and Napoleons fall under his power as the boughs of the tree beneath the woodman's axe. "*He is terrible to the kings of the earth.*" While they are terrible to others he is terrible to them. If they oppose themselves to his people, he will make short work of them; they shall perish before the terror of his arm, "for the Lord is a man of war, the Lord is his name." Rejoice before him all ye who adore the God of Jacob.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—No Psalm has a greater right to follow Ps. lxxv. than this, which is inscribed *To the Precentor, with accompaniment of stringed instruments* (*vid.* iv. 1), *a Psalm by Asaph, a song.* Similar expressions (*God of Jacob*, lxxv. 10, lxxvii. 7; *saints, wicked of the earth*, lxxv. 9, lxxvi. 10), and the same impress throughout speak in favour of unity of authorship. In other respects too, they form a pair: Ps. lxxv. prepares the way for the divine deed of judgment as imminent, which Ps. lxxvi. celebrates as having taken place.—*Franz Delitzsch.*

Verse 1.—"*In Judah is God known.*" God is truly and savingly known only in and through his Son: God indeed is obscurely and darkly known in his *works*, as a God of power; in his providence, as a God of authority, wisdom, and order; in his common mercies, as a God of bounty; and in his punishments and judgments, as a God of justice; but in Christ opened and preached in the gospel, God is known with a clear, a comfortable, and saving knowledge, as a father of grace and singular mercy and lovingkindness. "*In Judah*" (saith the psalmist) "*is God known: his name is great in Israel.*" "*In Judah,*" in his church, where his word and ordinances are, where Christ is preached, and the mystery of man's salvation is opened, there God is known *truly* without error, *perspicuously* without obscurities, and *savingly* without uncertainties; there he is known as a *King* in his courts, for the glory and beauty which he there manifesteth; as a *teacher* in his school, for the wisdom and knowledge which he there dispenseth; as a *dweller* in his house, for the holy orders he there prescribeth, and gracious rule and dominion he there erecteth and beareth in the souls of his servants; as a *bridegroom* in the banqueting house, for the spiritual dainties he there maketh, for the clear and open manifestation of himself, and love and comforts he there ministereth to his spiritual friends and guests; "*and his name is great in Israel;*" his power, wisdom, truth, love, and goodness is much magnified and very glorious in their apprehensions who know him in Christ Jesus.—*Alexander Grosse.*

Verse 1.—"*His name.*" By the "*name*" of God here, God himself is understood; for in so many good effects as God uttereth himself toward his kirk, *so many names* he giveth to himself whereby he may be praised of her. As for example, when he promiseth unto his kirk freely grace and mercy, his kirk giveth him a *name*, and calleth him merciful. When he keepeth his promise, and uttereth himself a faithful God to his kirk, his kirk giveth him a *name*, and calleth him a true God. When he delivereth his kirk out of danger, and

sheweth him a mighty God, and terrible against his enemies, the kirk giveth him a *name*, and calleth him a potent God, and so forth in the rest of his effects: so that by the *name* of God is understood here God himself, as God maketh himself to be known in his wonderful works.—*Robert Bruce.*

Verse 1.—"*His name is great in Israel.*" Properly the great name in Israel, that is, the church, is the name of Jesus, which is great, first, by its efficacy: for it signifies Saviour. There is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved. Secondly, it is great in dignity: for it is the name that is above every name. . . . . Thirdly, it is great in the breadth of its range, Ps. viii. 1: "*How excellent is thy name in all the earth.*"—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 2.—"*In Salem also is his tabernacle.*" It is not without meaning that Jerusalem has the appellation of *Salem;* for it is thereby insinuated that the *tabernacle* of God, notwithstanding the assaults of foes, in the very heart of the tumults of war remained *in peace.* How much more now that the invaders had been overthrown, would *prosperity* be enjoyed?—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 2.—"*In Salem also is his tabernacle.*" God the Holy Ghost is a spirit of peace, he is the comforter; he seals up peace (2 Corinthians i. 22). This blessed dove brings the olive branch of peace in his mouth: now a peaceable disposition evidenceth something of God in a man, therefore God loves to dwell there. "In Salem is God's tabernacle:" Salem signifies peace; God dwells in a peaceable spirit.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 2.—"*In Salem also is his tabernacle,*" etc. All the old versions, as well as the two English ones, have missed one especial force of this passage. There is no direct reference in words to any human habitation, but to the lair of the Lion of Judah. The word סֻכּוֹ does not only mean *his tabernacle,* but *his covert,* and is so translated in another place (Jer. xxv. 38): "He hath forsaken his covert, as the lion:" and the vaguer word מְעוֹנָתוֹ which succeeds may well be translated by "den," or some equivalent phrase. Ps. x. 9.—*Simon De Muis.*

Verses 2, 3.—The care of Salem, or Zion, lies at the bottom of all God's powerful actings and workings among the sons of men. Every mighty work of God throughout the world may be prefaced with these two verses. The whole course of affairs in the world is steered by Providence in reference to the good of Salem.—*John Owen.*

Verse 3.—"*There.*" Observe how it is said, "*There he brake,*" namely, in his temple, his habitation there. For unto that his temple doth the coherence in the verse afore carry it, for that was last in mention, and with the greatest emphasis. In the story we read how that Sennacherib's overthrow was from Hezekiah's prayer in the temple; for upon Sennacherib's letter, and Hezekiah's hearsay of the blasphemy, he took himself thither, went instantly into the temple, and began his prayer thus: "O thou God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims." He invocates him under that style of his dwelling in the holiest, and so hearing prayers there. Thus you have it recorded both in Isaiah and in 2 Kings xxix. 15. And how suitably, in answer hereunto, it is said here in the Psalm, that God gave forth sentence presently out of his tabernacle: yea, and that so suddenly too, as that the very execution is said to be done there, that is, from thence. And yet again, in the eighth verse of the Psalm, it is said to be a sentence from heaven too; "*Thou didst cause judgment*" (so called because it was the sentence of God as a judge) "*to be heard from heaven.*" Thus Hezekiah prayed, and thus God heard; and both as in the temple.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 3.—"*There.*" These men, to wit the King of Asshur and his accomplices, came to cast out God out of his dwelling place; but he stood to the defence of his own house, and showed them that he would not remove for their pleasure.—*Robert Bruce.*

Verse 4.—God was not known in Babylon, in Egypt, in other nations; his tabernacle and dwelling place was not amongst them, therefore they were not glorious. But see what is in the 4th verse, "*Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey;*" thou Judah, thou Israel, thou Salem, thou Zion, that hast spiritual mercies and blessings, art more glorious than they, whatever their glory be. Have the nations abroad goodly towers? thou hast the temple; have they stately cities? thou hast Jerusalem, the city of God; have they wise men? thou hast the prophets; have they gods of gold, silver, and stones? thou hast the true living God, Jehovah, to be thy God; have they human laws that are good? thou hast divine laws that excel; have they temporal excellencies? thou hast spiritual; have they the glory of the world? thou hast the glory of heaven.—*William Greenhill.*

Verse 4.—"*The mountains of prey.*" Why are they called the mountains *of prey?* There is a reference to *the lairs of the lions* in the mountains, whence they rush forth upon those who come that way, and tear them in pieces. In the same way the dwelling place of God was represented above under the title of a tabernacle or lair. Moreover, this is a mystic epithet of the *mountains of Judah*, by which it is hinted that the enemies who venture to approach that lair are wont to be torn in sunder: a terrible example of which had just been shown in the case of the Assyrian, there overthrown, torn, and spoiled. Compare Isaiah xxxi. 4.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 5.—"*The stouthearted are spoiled.*" There is indicated in these words that consternation of mind which deprives of judgment and power. *The valiant are spoiled of their heart:* that is, they who at other times were wise and courageous *have* now *lost their heart*, and have been reduced to foolishness and stupidity.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 5.—"*The stouthearted are spoiled.*" After the breaking of their weapons their spoliation is recorded, for that follows the slaughter of foes. Nor is mention made of that without reason. They had come to spoil, therefore are they deservedly spoiled.—*Musculus.*

Verse 5.—"*The stouthearted are spoiled.*" Some translate it, "*They are spoiled of their stout heart.*" The stouthearted, the strong, are spoiled. The strong man may be spoiled by a stronger; that's a good sense, but it is more elegantly rendered, "*they are spoiled of their stout heart;*" that is, the Lord takes their heart out of their bosom. Daring men, who fear nothing, are turned into *Magor-missabibs—fear round about;* their stout hearts are taken from them, and then they are so far from being a terror to other men, that they run from the shadow of a man; their courage is down; they cannot give a child a confident look, much less look dangers or enemies in the face.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 5 (*last clause*).—The strength and power of a man is in his hands; if they be gone, all his hope is gone. If a man's sword be taken from him, he will do what he can with his hands; but if his hands be gone, he may go to sleep for any disturbance he will work. For men not to find their hands, is not to have that power for the execution of their designs which formerly they had. —*John Owen.*

Verse 5 (*last clause*).—As we say of a man that goes lamely or lazily, "he cannot find his feet;" so of a man that acts lamely or lazily, or of a soldier that fights faintly and cowardly, "*he cannot find his hands.*"—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verses 5, 6.—

> For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
> And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
> And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
> And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever were still!
>
> And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
> But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride:
> And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
> And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

—*George Gordon, Lord Byron.*

Verse 6.—"*Cast into a deep sleep.*" It is observable, that the verb here used is the same as is used in the narrative of the act of Jael, and of the death of the proud enemy of Israel, Sisera, "*cast into a deep sleep*," by God's power, working by the hand of a woman.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 7.—"*Thou, even thou, art to be feared.*" The emphasis in the word "*thou*," redoubled, implies as much as if he had said, Not principalities, not powers, not hell, not death, nor anything for themselves, but thou, O Lord, alone art to be feared. Arguments and reasons to confirm it are two, here laid down in the text: the first is drawn from God's anger, who hath decreed, and accordingly executes vengeance upon all the proud. The second is drawn from his power; not princes, not armies, not men, not angels, are able to endure the breath of his fury; for, "*Who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?*" . . . . The anger of God is a terrible, unspeakable, unsupportable, intolerable burden. Every word in the text hath a special emphasis to prove this. "*Who may stand?*" "*Who?* Shall angels? They are but like refracted beams or rays, if God should hide his face, they would cease to shine. Shall man? His glory and pomp, like the colours in the rainbow, vanish away, when God puts forth in anger the brightness of his face. Shall devils? If he speak the word, they are tumbled down from heaven like lightning. "*Stand in thy sight.*" "*Stand.*" What! a reed against a cedar, a thistle in Lebanon against a cedar in Lebanon; a feather against a flame, a grasshopper against an Almighty, a head of glass against a rod of brass? "*When once thou art angry?*" "*Angry.*" By sending out his wrath, that it wounds like arrows; angry, in pouring it out, that it drowns like water; angry, in kindling of it, that it burns like fire; a consuming fire, but you tell me such a fire may be quenched; an unquenchable fire, but since that may cease to burn, when it lacks matter, it is in one word an everlasting fire, that never goes out. That, that's it; such anger as is never fully shown, but in punishment of reprobates; in no punishment, but that in hell; in none in hell, but that eternal.—*John Cragge's* "*Cabinet of Spirituall Jewells.*" 1657.

Verse 9.—"*God arose to judgment.*" This great judgment was wrought upon the enemies *when God rose:* it was not done when God sat; for the whole time when he sat his enemies were aloft, stirring their time, raging in murder, oppression, and blood. . . . . He bringeth in God here after the manner of earthly judges, after the custom of our judges; for first they sit down, they try, seek out, and advise, and after consideration they resolve, and after resolution they rise up, give forth judgment, and pronounce the sentence; even so the prophet bringeth in God after the same manner; sitting, and after sitting, rising and pronouncing the sentence.—*Robert Bruce.*

Verse 9.—"*To save all the meek.*" We see from this passage what care God takes of the afflicted. When he is angry with the ungodly, he is angry with them chiefly because they have oppressed the poor and the innocent. Although he detests all iniquity, yet he is most indignant with that which is committed against the needy and guiltless. So in Ps. xii. "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord." So in this verse, when God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth.—*Musculus.*

Verse 9.—Is not this the day when the Saviour comes to reign? the day when the results of things shall best be seen; the day when every saint with anointed

eye shall see that events all tended to the glory of God; the day when they shall sing better far than now.

"Surely the wrath of man praiseth thee.
Thou girdest thyself with the remnant of wrath."

—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 10.—"*Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee.*" Persecutions tend to correct the failings of good men, and to exercise and illustrate their several graces and virtues. By these, good men are usually made much better and more approved, while they tend to exercise our patience, to quicken our devotion, to evidence our zeal and Christian fortitude, and to show to the whole world what love we bear to the truth, and how much we are willing to undergo for the honour of God. Till they have suffered something for it, truth is too apt to grow cheap and be less prized many times, even by those that are good men in the main; whereas we are apt on the contrary, never to value it at a higher rate, or to be more zealous for it, or to make better use of it, than when it is opposed and persecuted. What more truly beneficial therefore, or tending to the divine glory, than for God, who useth to bring good out of evil, to make use also of the opposers of his truth, to rouse up his servants whom he sees growing more remiss and negligent than they should be, and to suffer such temptations to assault them, by which their drowsy minds may be spurred on into a greater love and zeal for the truth, and a deeper sense of the divine benefit in it, and, in general, excited to the more diligent performance of their duty.—*Richard Pearson.* 1684.

Verse 10.—"*The wrath of man shall praise thee.*" In the Septuagint it is, The wrath of man shall *keep holy-day* to thee, shall increase a festival for thee. God many times gets up in the world on Satan's shoulders. When matters are ravelled and disordered, he can find out the right end of the thread, and how to disentangle us again; and when we have spoiled a business, he can dispose it for good, and make an advantage of those things which seem to obscure the glory of his name.—*Thomas Manton.*

Verse 10.—"*The wrath of man shall praise thee.*" The wrath of wicked men against the people of God is very tributary to his praise. 1. It puts them upon many subtil devices and cunning stratagems, in frustrating of which the wisdom of God and his care of his Church is very much illustrated. 2. The wrath of wicked men impels them to many violent and forcible attempts upon the people of God to destroy them, and so gives him occasion to manifest his power in their defence. 3. It makes them sometimes fit to be his instruments in correcting his people, and so he vindicates himself from the suspicion of being a patron to sin in them that are nearest to him, and makes them that hate holiness promote it in his people, and them that intend them the greatest hurt, to do them the greatest good. 4. It administers occasion to him for the manifestation of the power of his grace in upholding the spirits of his people and the being of his church in despite of all that enemies can do against them. 5. It serves very much to adorn God's most signal undertakings for his people in the world. 6. It serves to manifest the glory of God's justice upon his people's enemies in the day when he rises up to avenge himself upon them, when he shall stand over them, lashing them with scorpions, and at every blow mind their former cruelties. Here, take that for your inhuman rage against my people at such a place, and that for your barbarous usage of them at such a time. Now see how good it is to be imprisoned, beaten, tortured, burnt, and sawn asunder. Thus the enemies themselves are often constrained to acknowledge with Adoni-Bezek the righteous hand of God upon them in the day of inquisition.—*Condensed from John Warren's Sermon before Parliament.* 1656.

Verse 10.—"*The wrath of man.*" Wrath is anger accented unto the highest pitch, or blown up into a flame. "*The wrath of man,*" (in the original it is *The wrath of Adam*, or *the wrath of clay*, weak, impotent man) "*shall praise thee,*" *i.e.*, it shall turn to the praise and glory of God through his overruling

providence, though quite otherwise intended. God will bring honour to himself, and serve his own holy and wise designs out of it. . . . . This expression, "*the wrath of man*," imports the weakness and impotence of it; it is but the wrath of *Adam*, or of *red clay*. How contemptibly doth the Spirit of God speak of man, and of the power of man, in Scripture? "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" The wrath of man, when it is lengthened out to its utmost boundaries, can only go to the length of killing the body, or of the breaking the sheath of clay in which the soul lodges, and then it can do no more.—*Ebenezer Erskine.*

Verse 10.—"*Shall praise thee.*" God turns the wrath of man to the praise of his adorable sovereignty. Never have the Lord's people had such awful impressions of the sovereignty of God, as when they have been in the furnace of man's wrath, then they became dumb with silence. When the Chaldean and Sabean robbers are let loose to plunder and spoil the substance of Job, he is made to view adorable sovereignty in it, saying, "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord." It is in such a case as this that God says to his own people, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen." What work of God about the church is advanced by the wrath of men? 1. His *discovering* work; for by the wind of man's wrath he separates between the precious and the vile, betwixt the chaff and the wheat. In the day of the church's prosperity and quiet hypocrites and true believers are mingled together, like the chaff and the wheat in the barn floor: but the Lord, like the husbandman, opens the door of his barn, and puts the wind of man's wrath through it, that the world may know which is which. O, sirs, much chaff is cast up already, both among ministers and professors; but it is like the wind and sieve may cast up much more yet ere all be done. 2. God's *purging* work is advanced among his own children by the wrath of men: there is much of the dross of corruption cleaves to the Lord's people while in the wilderness. Now, the Lord heats the furnace of man's wrath, and casts his people into it, that when he has tried them, he may bring them forth as gold. 3. God's *uniting* work is thereby advanced. In a time of peace and external tranquility the sheep of Christ scatter and divide among themselves; but God lets loose the dogs upon them, and then the flock runs together; or like pieces of metal cast into the fire, they run together in a lump. 4. God's *enlarging* work, or his work of spreading the gospel, is sometimes advanced by the wrath of man. Acts viii. 1—5. The gospel, like the chamomile, the more it is trodden upon, the more it spreads.—*Ebenezer Erskine.*

Verse 10.—"*The remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.*" "***The remainder of wrath,***" *i.e.* what is left behind of the wrath of men, when God has glorified himself thereby. Even after God has defeated the purposes of wicked men, and made them contribute to his glory, yet there is abundance of wrath remaining. But what becomes of that wrath that is left? God shall "*restrain*" it. The word signifies to *gird up*. However God may see fit to slacken the bridle of his providence, and suffer wicked men to vent their wrath and enmity, as far as it shall contribute to his glory; yet the superplus and the remainder of his wrath that is not for his glory and his people's profit, God will gird it up, that they shall not get it vented. . . . . If any wrath of man remain beyond what shall bring in a revenue of praise unto God, he will *restrain it*, and bind it up like the waters of a mill: he will suffer as much of the current of water to run upon the wheel, as serves to carry it about and grind his corn, but the remainder of the water he sets it off another way: so God will let out as much of the current of man's wrath as shall serve the ends of his glory and our good, but the remainder of the stream and current he will *restrain*, and turn another way. In Isai. xxviii. we are told that God will not be aye "threshing his corn, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen. This cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working." All this comfort is sure and certain, there is not the least peradventure about it, that the flame of man's wrath shall praise the Lord, and the

superfluous fire shall be quenched, or hemmed in; for here we have God's parole of honour for it: "*Surely* the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."—*Ebenezer Erskine.*

Verse 10.—"***The remainder** of wrath shalt thou restrain.*" חֲמַת *Chemoth*, "wrath," in the plural number, seems to be put in opposition to *chamoth*, the *single wrath* of man in the former part of the verse; to shew there is more wrath which God is to restrain, than merely that of man. There is also more pride which needs a like restraint; namely, that of the *first Lucifer*, who sinned, and, as is thought, fell by aspiring to ascend, and to be like the Most High. There are finally, other *counsels* also, as well as other *wrath* and *pride*, besides human, which God confounds. There is a wisdom that descendeth not from above (no, nor grows on earth) but is devilish, James iii. 15. And both *wrath*, *pride*, and *wisdom*, of *devils* as well as *men*, shall God *restrain*, when he pleases not to turn them to his praise. Let there be hellish plots, yet our God shall confound them.—*From "A Sermon preached . . . . before the Queen. . . . . By Edward [Wetenhall] Lord Bishop of Corke and Rosse.* 1691."

Verse 10.—"*Thou shalt restrain.*" This, in the Hebrew, is expressed in one word, תַּחְגֹּר, which imports the begirding or binding of it in on every side, that it shall by no means break out, but shall be kept in, as a dog in a chain, as a lion in his den, how violent soever.—*Cornelius Burges, in "Another Sermon preached to the Honourable House of Commons. . . . . November the fifth*, 1641."

Verse 11.—"*Round about him.*" A description of his people, as the twelve tribes pitched round about the tabernacle, Num. ii. 2; and the four-and-twenty elders were round about God's throne, Rev. iv. 4. So the Chaldee expoundeth it;—*Ye that dwell about his sanctuary.—Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 12.—"*Cut off.*" He deals with princes as men deal with a vine. An axe is too strong for a cluster of grapes, or a sprig of a vine; it easily cuts them off: so God by a judgment easily cuts off the spirit of princes; they are not able to stand against the least judgments of God: when he puts strength into worms, or any other creatures they fall.—*William Greenhill, in a Sermon, entitled, "The Axe at the Root."*

Verse 12.—The Lord *cuts off the spirit of princes;* the word is, *he slips off*, as one should slip off a flower between one's fingers, or as one should slip off a bunch of grapes from a vine, so soon is it done. How great uncertainty have many great ones, by their miserable experience, found in their outward glory and worldly felicity! What a change hath a little time made in all their honours, riches, and delights! That victorious emperor Henry the Fourth, who had fought two-and-fifty pitched battles, fell to that poverty before he died, that he was forced to petition to be a prebend in the church of Spier, to maintain him in his old age. And Procopius reports of King Gillimer, who was a potent king of the Vandals, who was so low brought, as to intreat his friend to send him a sponge, a loaf of bread, and a harp; a sponge to dry up his tears, a loaf of bread to maintain his life, and a harp to solace himself in his misery. Philip de Comines reports of a Duke of Exeter, who though he had married Edward the Fourth's sister, yet he saw him in the Low Countries begging barefoot. Bellisarius, the chief man living in his time, having his eyes put out, was led at last in a string, crying, "give a halfpenny to Bellisarius."—*Jeremiah Burroughs.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—Reverence for God's name proportionate to true knowledge of it.
Verse 2.—The peculiar relation of God to his church.
Verse 2 (*first clause*).—A peaceful church the tabernacle of God. The

benefits peace confers, the evils of strife, the causes of dissension, and the means of promoting unity.

Verse 3.—Christian glories, or the victories vouchsafed to the church over heathenism, heresy, persecution, etc.

Verse 3.—I. Where enemies are conquered; "There;" not on the battle-field so much as in the house of God; as Amalek by Moses on the Mount; Sennacherib by Hezekiah in the Sanctuary. II. How there? 1. By faith. 2. By prayer. "The weapons of our warfare," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 4.—The Lord, our portion, compared with the treasures of empires.

Verse 4.—I. What the world is, compared with the church: "Mountains of prey." 1. Cruelty instead of love. 2. Violence instead of peace. II. What the church is, compared with the world. 1. "More glorious," because "more excellent." 2. "More excellent," because "more glorious." Both are more real and abiding.—*G. R.*

Verse 5.—"*They have slept their sleep.*" Divers kinds of deaths or sleeps for the various classes of men.

Verse 7.—The anger of God. A very suggestive subject.

Verses 8, 9.—I. The characters described: "the meek of the earth." II. The need implied. 1. To be vindicated. 2. To be saved. III. The divine interposition on their behalf: "Thou didst cause," etc. "When God arose," etc. IV. The effect of their deliverance: "The earth feared," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 10.—I. Evil permitted for good: "The wrath," etc. II. Restrained for good: "The remainder," etc. Or, I. Ruled. II. Overruled.—*G. R.*

Verse 11.—I. To whom vows may be made. Not to man, but God. II. What vows should be thus made. 1. Of self-dedication. 2. Of self-service. 3. Of self-sacrifice. III. How kept: "Vow and pay." 1. From duty. 2. From fear of his displeasure.—*G. R.*

Verse 11.—The propriety, obligation, pleasure, and profit of presenting gifts unto the Lord.

PSALM LXXVII.

TITLE.—To the Chief Musician, to Jeduthun. *It was meet that another leader of the psalmody should take his turn. No harp should be silent in the courts of the Lord's house.* A Psalm of Asaph. *Asaph was a man of exercised mind, and often touched the minor key; he was thoughtful, contemplative, believing, but withal there was a dash of sadness about him, and this imparted a tonic flavour to his songs. To follow him with understanding, it is needful to have done business on the great waters, and weathered many an Atlantic gale.*

DIVISIONS.—*If we follow the poetical arrangement, and divide at the Selahs, we shall find the troubled man of God pleading in verses* 1—3, *and then we shall hear him lamenting and arguing within himself,* 4—9. *From verses* 10—15 *his meditations run Godward, and in the close he seems as in a vision to behold the wonders of the Red Sea and the wilderness. At this point, as if lost in an ecstacy, he hurriedly closes the Psalm with an abruptness, the effect of which is quite startling. The Spirit of God knows when to cease speaking, which is more than those do who, for the sake of making a methodical conclusion, prolong their words even to weariness. Perhaps this Psalm was meant to be a prelude to the next, and, if so, its sudden close is accounted for. The hymn now before us is for experienced saints only, but to them it will be of rare value as a transcript of their own inner conflicts.*

EXPOSITION.

I CRIED unto God with my voice, *even* unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.

2 In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.

3 I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.

1. "*I cried unto God with my voice.*" This Psalm has much sadness in it, but we may be sure it will end well, for it begins with prayer, and prayer never has an ill issue. Asaph did not run to man but to the Lord, and to him he went, not with studied, starchy, stilted words, but with a cry, the natural, unaffected, unfeigned expression of pain. He used his voice also, for though vocal utterance is not necessary to the life of prayer, it often seems forced upon us by the energy of our desires. Sometimes the soul feels compelled to use the voice, for thus it finds a freer vent for its agony. It is a comfort to hear the alarm-bell ringing when the house is invaded by thieves. "*Even unto God with my voice.*" He returned to his pleading. If once sufficed not, he cried again. He needed an answer, he expected one, he was eager to have it soon, therefore he cried again and again, and with his voice too, for the sound helped his earnestness. "*And he gave ear unto me.*" Importunity prevailed. The gate opened to the stearly knock. It shall be so with us in our hour of trial, the God of grace will hear us in due season.

2. "*In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord.*" All day long his distress drove him to his God, so that when night came he continued still in the same search. God had hidden his face from his servant, therefore the first care of the troubled saint was to seek his Lord again. This was going to the root of the matter and removing the main impediment first. Diseases and tribulations are easily enough endured when God is found of us, but without him they crush us to the earth. "*My sore ran in the night, and ceased not.*" As by day so by

night his trouble was on him and his prayer continued. Some of us know what it is, both physically and spiritually, to be compelled to use these words: no respite has been afforded us by the silence of the night, our bed has been a rack to us, our body has been in torment, and our spirit in anguish. It appears that this sentence is wrongly translated, and should be, "my hand was stretched out all night;" this shews that his prayer ceased not, but with uplifted hand he continued to seek succour of his God. "*My soul refused to be comforted.*" He refused some comforts as too weak for his case, others as untrue, others as unhallowed; but chiefly because of distraction, he declined even those grounds of consolation which ought to have been effectual with him. As a sick man turns away even from the most nourishing food, so did he. It is impossible to comfort those who refuse to be comforted. You may bring them to the waters of the promise, but who shall make them drink if they will not do so? Many a daughter of despondency has pushed aside the cup of gladness, and many a son of sorrow has hugged his chains. There are times when we are suspicious of good news, and are not to be persuaded into peace, though the happy truth should be as plain before us as the King's highway.

3. "*I remembered God, and was troubled.*" He who is the wellspring of delight to faith became an object of dread to the psalmist's distracted heart. The justice, holiness, power, and truth of God have all a dark side, and indeed all the attributes may be made to look black upon us if our eye be evil; even the brightness of divine love blinds us, and fills us with a horrible suspicion that we have neither part nor lot in it. He is wretched indeed whose memories of The Ever Blessed prove distressing to him; yet the best of men know the depth of this abyss. "*I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.*" He mused and mused but only sank the deeper. His inward disquietudes did not fall asleep as soon as they were expressed, but rather they returned upon him, and leaped over him like raging billows of an angry sea. It was not his body alone which smarted, but his noblest nature writhed in pain, his life itself seemed crushed into the earth. It is in such a case that death is coveted as a relief, for life becomes an intolerable burden. With no spirit left in us to sustain our infirmity, our case becomes forlorn; like a man in a tangle of briars who is stripped of his clothes, every hook of the thorns becomes a lancet, and we bleed with ten thousand wounds. Alas, my God, the writer of this exposition well knows what thy servant Asaph meant, for his soul is familiar with the way of grief. Deep glens and lonely caves of soul depressions, my spirit knows full well your awful glooms! "*Selah.*" Let the song go softly; this is no merry dance for the swift feet of the daughters of music, pause ye awhile, and let sorrow take breath between her sighs.

4 Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

5 I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.

6 I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.

7 Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?

8 Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth *his* promise fail for evermore?

9 Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.

4. "*Thou holdest mine eyes waking.*" The fears which thy strokes excite in me forbid my eyelids to fall, my eyes continue to watch as sentinels forbidden to rest. Sleep is a great comforter, but it forsakes the sorrowful, and then

their sorrow deepens and eats into the soul. If God holds the eyes waking, what anodyne shall give us rest? How much we owe to him who giveth his beloved sleep! "*I am so troubled that I cannot speak.*" Great griefs are dumb. Deep streams brawl not among the pebbles like the shallow brooklets which live on passing showers. Words fail the man whose heart fails him. He had cried to God but he could not speak to man, what a mercy it is that if we can do the first, we need not despair though the second should be quite out of our power. Sleepless and speechless Asaph was reduced to great extremities, and yet he rallied, and even so shall we.

5. "*I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.*" If no good was in the present, memory ransacked the past to find consolation. She fain would borrow a light from the altars of yesterday to light the gloom of to-day. It is our duty to search for comfort, and not in sullen indolence yield to despair; in quiet contemplation topics may occur to us which will prove the means of raising our spirits, and there is scarcely any theme more likely to prove consolatory than that which deals with the days of yore, the years of the olden time, when the Lord's faithfulness was tried and proved by hosts of his people. Yet it seems that even this consideration created depression rather than delight in the good man's soul, for he contrasted his own mournful condition with all that was bright in the venerable experiences of ancient saints, and so complained the more. Ah, sad calamity of a jaundiced mind to see nothing as it should be seen, but everything as through a veil of mist.

6. "*I call to remembrance my song in the night.*" At other times his spirit had a song for the darkest hour, but now he could only recall the strain as a departed memory. Where is the harp which once thrilled sympathetically to the touch of these joyful fingers? My tongue, hast thou forgotten to praise? Hast thou no skill except in mournful ditties? Ah me, how sadly fallen am I! How lamentable that I who like the nightingale could charm the night, am now fit comrade for the hooting owl. "*I commune with mine own heart.*" He did not cease from introspection, for he was resolved to find the bottom of his sorrow, and trace it to its fountain head. He made sure work of it by talking not with his mind only, but with his inmost heart; it was heart work with him. He was no idler, no melancholy trifler; he was up and at it, resolutely resolved that he would not tamely die of despair, but would fight for his hope to the last moment of life. "*And my spirit made diligent search.*" He ransacked his experience, his memory, his intellect, his whole nature, his entire self, either to find comfort or to discover the reason why it was denied him. That man will not die by the hand of the enemy who has enough force of soul remaining to struggle in this fashion.

7. "*Will the Lord cast off for ever?*" This was one of the matters he enquired into. He painfully knew that the Lord might leave his people for a season, but his fear was that the time might be prolonged and have no close; eagerly, therefore, he asked, will the Lord utterly and finally reject those who are his own, and suffer them to be the objects of his contemptuous reprobation, his everlasting cast-offs? This he was persuaded could not be. No instance in the years of ancient times led him to fear that such could be the case. "*And will he be favourable no more?*" Favourable he had been; would that goodwill never again show itself? Was the sun set never to rise again? Would spring never follow the long and dreary winter? The questions are suggested by fear, but they are also the cure of fear. It is a blessed thing to have grace enough to look such questions in the face, for their answer is self-evident and eminently fitted to cheer the heart.

8. "*Is his mercy clean gone for ever?*" If he has no love for his elect, has he not still his mercy left? Has that dried up? Has he no pity for the sorrowful? "*Doth his promise fail for evermore?*" His word is pledged to those who plead with him; is that become of none effect? Shall it be said that from one generation to another the Lord's word has fallen to the ground; whereas aforetime he kept his covenant to all generations of them that fear him? It is

a wise thing thus to put unbelief through the catechism. Each one of the questions is a dart aimed at the very heart of despair. Thus have we also in our days of darkness done battle for life itself.

9. "*Hath God forgotten to be gracious?*" Has El, the Mighty One, become great in everything but grace? Does he know how to afflict, but not how to uphold? Can he forget anything? Above all, can he forget to exercise that attribute which lies nearest to his essence, for he is love? "*Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?*" Are the pipes of goodness choked up so that love can no more flow through them? Do the bowels of Jehovah no longer yearn towards his own beloved children? Thus with cord after cord unbelief is smitten and driven out of the soul; it raises questions and we will meet it with questions: it makes us think and act ridiculously, and we will heap scorn upon it. The argument of this passage assumes very much the form of a *reductio ad absurdum*. Strip it naked, and mistrust is a monstrous piece of folly. "*Selah.*" Here rest awhile, for the battle of questions needs a lull.

10 And I said, This *is* my infirmity: *but I will remember* the years of the right hand of the most High.

11 I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.

12 I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.

13 Thy way, O God, *is* in the sanctuary: who *is so* great a God as *our* God?

14 Thou *art* the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people.

15 Thou hast with *thine* arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.

10. "*And I said, This is my infirmity.*" He has won the day, he talks reasonably now, and surveys the field with a cooler mind. He confesses that unbelief is an infirmity, a weakness, a folly, a sin. He may also be understood to mean, "this is my appointed sorrow," I will bear it without complaint. When we perceive that our affliction is meted out by the Lord, and is the ordained portion of our cup, we become reconciled to it, and no longer rebel against the inevitable. Why should we not be content if it be the Lord's will? What he arranges it is not for us to cavil at. "*But I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.*" Here a good deal is supplied by our translators, and they make the sense to be that the psalmist would console himself by remembering the goodness of God to himself and others of his people in times gone by: but the original seems to consist only of the words, "the years of the right hand of the most High," and to express the idea that his long continued affliction, reaching through several years, was allotted to him by the Sovereign Lord of all. 'Tis well when a consideration of the divine goodness and greatness silences all complaining, and creates a childlike acquiescence.

11. "*I will remember the works of the Lord.*" Fly back my soul, away from present turmoils, to the grandeurs of history, the sublime deeds of Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts; for he is the same and is ready even now to defend his servants as in days of yore. "*Surely I will remember thy wonders of old.*" Whatever else may glide into oblivion, the marvellous works of the Lord in the ancient days must not be suffered to be forgotten. Memory is a fit handmaid for faith. When faith has its seven years of famine, memory like Joseph in Egypt opens her granaries.

12. "*I will meditate also of all thy work.*" Sweet work to enter into Jehovah's work of grace, and there to lie down and ruminate, every thought being

absorbed in the one precious subject. "*And talk of thy doings.*" It is well that the overflow of the mouth should indicate the good matter which fills the heart. Meditation makes rich talking; it is to be lamented that so much of the conversation of professors is utterly barren, because they take no time for contemplation. A meditative man should be a talker, otherwise he is a mental miser, a mill which grinds corn only for the miller. The subject of our meditation should be choice, and then our talk will be edifying; if we meditate on folly and affect to speak wisdom, our double-mindedness will soon be known unto all men. Holy talk following upon meditation has a consoling power in it for ourselves as well as for those who listen, hence its value in the connection in which we find it in this passage.

13. "*Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary,*" or *in holiness.* In the holy place we understand our God, and rest assured that all his ways are just and right. When we cannot trace his way, because it is "in the sea," it is a rich consolation that we can trust it, for it is in holiness. We must have fellowship with holiness if we would understand "the ways of God to man." He who would be wise must worship. The pure in heart shall see God, and pure worship is the way to the philosophy of providence. "*Who is so great a God as our God?*" In him the good and the great are blended. He surpasses in both. None can for a moment be compared with the mighty One of Israel.

14. "*Thou art the God that doest wonders.*" Thou alone art Almighty. The false gods are surrounded with the pretence of wonders, but thou really workest them. It is thy peculiar prerogative to work marvels: it is no new or strange thing with thee, it is according to thy wont and use. Herein is renewed reason for holy confidence. It would be a great wonder if we did not trust the wonder-working God. "*Thou hast declared thy strength among the people.*" Not only Israel, but Egypt, Bashan, Edom, Philistia, and all the nations have seen Jehovah's power. It was no secret in the olden time and to this day it is published abroad. God's providence and grace are both full of displays of his power; he is in the latter peculiarly conspicuous as "mighty to save." Who will not be strong in faith when there is so strong an arm to lean upon? Shall our trust be doubtful when his power is beyond all question? My soul see to it that these considerations banish thy mistrust.

15. "*Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph.*" All Israel, the two tribes of Joseph as well as those which sprang from the other sons of Jacob, were brought out of Egypt by a display of divine power, which is here ascribed not to the hand but to the arm of the Lord, because it was the fulness of his might. Ancient believers were in the constant habit of referring to the wonders of the Red Sea, and we also can unite with them, taking care to add the song of the Lamb to that of Moses, the servant of God. The comfort derivable from such a meditation is obvious and abundant, for he who brought up his people from the house of bondage will continue to redeem and deliver till we come into the promised rest. "*Selah.*" Here we have another pause preparatory to a final burst of song.

16 The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled.

17 The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad.

18 The voice of thy thunder *was* in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook.

19 Thy way *is* in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.

20 Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

16. "*The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid.*" As if conscious of its Maker's presence, the sea was ready to flee from before his face. The conception is highly poetical, the psalmist has the scene before his mind's eye, and describes it gloriously. The water saw its God, but man refuses to discern him; it was afraid, but proud sinners are rebellious and fear not the Lord. "*The depths also were troubled.*" To their heart the floods were made afraid. Quiet caves of the sea, far down in the abyss, were moved with affright; and the lowest channels were left bare, as the water rushed away from its place, in terror of the God of Israel.

17. "*The clouds poured out water.*" Obedient to the Lord, the lower region of the atmosphere yielded its aid to overthrow the Egyptian host. The cloudy chariots of heaven hurried forward to discharge their floods. "*The skies sent out a sound.*" From the loftier aerial regions thundered the dread artillery of the Lord of Hosts. Peal on peal the skies sounded over the heads of the routed enemies, confusing their minds and adding to their horror. "*Thine arrows also went abroad.*" Lightnings flew like bolts from the bow of God. Swiftly, hither and thither, went the red tongues of flame, on helm and shield they gleamed; anon with blue bale-fires revealing the innermost caverns of the hungry sea which waited to swallow up the pride of Mizraim. Behold, how all the creatures wait upon their God, and show themselves strong to overthrow his enemies.

18. "*The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven,*" or "*in the whirlwind.*" Rushing on with terrific swiftness and bearing all before it, the storm was as a chariot driven furiously, and a voice was heard (even thy voice, O Lord!) out of the fiery car, even as when a mighty man in battle urges forward his charger, and shouts to it aloud. All heaven resounded with the voice of the Lord. "*The lightnings lightened the world.*" The entire globe shone in the blaze of Jehovah's lightnings. No need for other light amid the battle of that terrible night, every wave gleamed in the fire-flashes, and the shore was lit up with the blaze. How pale were men's faces in that hour, when all around the fire leaped from sea to shore, from crag to hill, from mountain to star, till the whole universe was illuminated in honour of Jehovah's triumph. "*The earth trembled and shook.*" It quaked and quaked again. Sympathetic with the sea, the solid shore forgot its quiescence and heaved in dread. How dreadful art thou, O God, when thou comest forth in thy majesty to humble thine arrogant adversaries.

19. "*Thy way is in the sea.*" Far down in secret channels of the deep is thy roadway; when thou wilt thou canst make a sea a highway for thy glorious march. "*And thy path in the great waters.*" There, where the billows surge and swell, thou still dost walk; Lord of each crested wave. "*And thy footsteps are not known.*" None can follow thy tracks by foot or eye. Thou art alone in thy glory, and thy ways are hidden from mortal ken. Thy purposes thou wilt accomplish, but the means are often concealed, yea, they need no concealing, they are in themselves too vast and mysterious for human understanding. Glory be to thee, O Jehovah.

20. "*Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.*" What a transition from tempest to peace, from wrath to love. Quietly as a flock Israel was guided on, by human agency which veiled the excessive glory of the divine presence. The smiter of Egypt was the shepherd of Israel. He drove his foes before him, but went before his people. Heaven and earth fought on his side against the sons of Ham, but they were equally subservient to the interests of the sons of Jacob. Therefore, with devout joy and full of consolation, we close this Psalm; the song of one who forgot how to speak and yet learned to sing far more sweetly than his fellows.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—Whenever, and by whomsoever, the Psalm may have been written, it clearly is individual, not national. It utterly destroys all the beauty, all the tenderness and depth of feeling in the opening portion, if we suppose that the people are introduced speaking in the first person. The allusions to the national history may indeed show that the season was a season of national distress, and that the sweet singer was himself bowed down by the burden of the time, and oppressed by woes which he had no power to alleviate; but it is his own sorrow, not the sorrow of others under which he sighs, and of which he has left the pathetic record.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 1.—In the beginning of the Psalm, before speaking of his sorrows, he hastens to show the necessary and most efficacious remedy for allaying sorrow. He says that he did not, as many do, out of their impatience of grief or murmuring, either accuse God of cruelty or tyranny, or utter blasphemous words by which dishonour might fall upon God, or by indulging in sorrow and distrust hasten his own destruction, or fill the air with vain complainings, but fled straight to God, and to him unburdened his sorrow, and sought that he would not shut him out from that grace which he bountifully offers to all. This is the only and sure sovereign remedy which most effectually heals his griefs.—*Mollerus.*

Verse 1.—"*I cried.*" To the Orientals the word צָעַק presented the idea of a *crash*, as of the heavens sending out thunders and lightnings. Whence beyond other things he metaphorically says, *he cried for sorrow;* . . . shaken with a tempest of thoughts he burst out into an open and loud-sounding complaint.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 1.—"*Even unto God with my voice.*" The repetition here is emphatic. The idea is that it was an earnest or fervent cry.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 1 (*last clause*).—At the second knock, the door of grace flew open: *the Lord heard me.—John Collings.*

Verse 2.—"*In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord.*" Days of trouble must be days of prayer; in days of inward trouble, especially when God seems to have withdrawn from us, we must seek him, and seek till we find him. In the day of his trouble he did not seek for the diversions of business or recreation, to shake off his trouble that way, but he sought God, and his favour and grace. Those that are under trouble of mind, must not think to drink it away, or laugh it away, but pray it away.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 2.—"*My sore ran in the night.*" Hebrew: *My hand was poured out;* that is, stretched out in prayer; or wet with continual weeping. *Non fuit remissa, nec retracta in lectum.—John Trapp.*

Verse 2.—"*My sore ran in the night, and ceased not,*" etc. There is no healing of this wound, no easing of this sore, no cleansing of the conscience, no quieting of a man's spirit: till God whom the soul seeketh show himself as the Physician, the evil continueth still and groweth."—*David Dickson.*

Verse 2.—"*My soul refused to be comforted.*" God has provided suitable and sufficient comfort for his people. He sends them comforters just as their circumstances require. But they at times refuse to hear the voice of the charmer. The Lord has perhaps taken away an idol—or he withholds his sensible presence, that they may learn to live by faith—or he has blighted their worldly prospects—or he has written vanity and emptiness upon all their gourds, cisterns, and delights. They give way to passion, as did Jonah—or they sink into sullen gloom—or allow unhumbled pride to rule the spirit—or yield to extreme sorrow, as Rachel did—or fall under the power of temptation—or imbibe the notion that they have no right to comfort. This is wrong, all wrong, decidedly wrong. Look at what is left you, at what the gospel presents to

vou, at what heaven will be to you. But the psalmist was recovered from this state. He was convinced that it was wrong. He was sorry for his sin. He was reformed in his spirit and conduct. He wrote this Psalm to instruct, caution, and warn us. Observe, they who are entitled to all comfort, often through their own folly, enjoy the least. The Lord's people are often their own tormentors, they put away the cup of comfort from them, and say they are unworthy of it.

O Thou source of every blessing,
Chase my sorrows, cheer my heart,
Till in heaven, thy smiles possessing,
Life, and joy, and peace impart.

—*James Smith.*

Verse 2.—"*My soul refused to be comforted.*" Poor I, that am but of yesterday, have known some that have been so deeply plunged in the gulf of despair, that they would throw all the spiritual cordials that have been tendered to them against the walls. They were strong in reasoning against their own souls, and resolved against everything that might be a comfort and support unto them. They have been much set against all ordinances and religious services; they have cast off holy duties themselves, and peremptorily refused to join with others in them; yea, they have, out of a sense of sin and wrath, which hath laid hard upon them, refused the necessary comforts of this life, even to the overthrow of natural life, and yet out of this horrible pit, this hell upon earth, hath God delivered their souls, and given them such manifestations of his grace and favour, that they would not exchange them for a thousand worlds. O despairing souls, you see that others, whose conditions have been as bad if not worse than yours, have obtained mercy. God hath turned their hell into a heaven; he hath remembered them in their low estate; he hath pacified their raging consciences, and quieted their distracted souls; he hath wiped all tears from their eyes; and he hath been a well-spring of life unto their hearts. Therefore be not discouraged, O despairing souls, but look up to the mercy-seat.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 3.—"*I remembered God, and was troubled.*" If our hearts or consciences condemn us, it is impossible to remember him without being troubled. It will then be painful to remember that he is our Creator and Benefactor, for the remembrance will be attended with a consciousness of base ingratitude. It will be painful to think of him as Lawgiver; for such thoughts will remind us that we have broken his law. It will be painful to think of his holiness; for if he is holy, he must hate our sins, and be angry with us as sinners:—of his justice and truth, for these perfections make it necessary that he should fulfil his threatenings and punish us for our sins. It will be painful to think of his omniscience—for this perfection makes him acquainted with our most secret offences, and renders it impossible to conceal them from his view; of his omnipresence—for the constant presence of an invisible witness must be disagreeable to those who wish to indulge their sinful propensities. It will be painful to think of his power—for it enables him to restrain or destroy, as he pleases: of his sovereignty, for sinners always hate to see themselves in the hands of a sovereign God: of his eternity and immutability—for from his possessing these perfections it follows that he will never alter the threatenings which he has denounced against sinners, and that he will always live to execute them. It will be painful to think of him as judge; for we shall feel, that as sinners, we have no reason to expect a favorable sentence from his lips. It will even be painful to think of the perfect goodness and excellence of his character: for his goodness leaves us without excuse in rebelling against him, and makes our sins appear exceeding sinful.—*Edward Payson.*

Verse 3.—"*I remembered God, and was troubled.*" All had not been well between God and him, and whereas formerly, in his remembrance of God, his thoughts were chiefly exercised about his love and kindness, now they were

wholly possessed with his own sin and unkindness. This causeth his trouble. Herein lies a share of the entanglements occasioned by sin. Saith such a soul in itself, "Foolish creature, hast thou thus requited the Lord? Is this the return that thou hast made unto him for all his love, his kindness, his consolations, mercies? Is this thy kindness for him, thy love to him? Is this thy kindness to thy friend? Is this thy boasting of him, that thou hadst found so much goodness and excellence in him and his love, that though all men should forsake him, thou never wouldst do so? Are all thy promises, all thy engagements which thou madest unto God, in times of distress, upon prevailing obligations, and mighty impressions of his good Spirit upon thy soul, now come to this, that thou shouldst so foolishly forget, neglect, despise, cast him off? Well! now he is gone; he is withdrawn from thee; and what wilt thou do? Art thou not even ashamed to desire him to return?" They were thoughts of this nature that cut Peter to the heart upon his fall. The soul finds them cruel as death, and strong as the grave. It is bound in the chains of them, and cannot be comforted, Ps. xxxviii. 3—6.—*John Owen.*

Verse 3.—There are moments in the life of all believers when God and his ways become unintelligible to them. They get lost in profound meditation, and nothing is left them but a despairing sigh. But we know from Paul the apostle that the Holy Spirit intercedes for believers with God, when they cannot utter their sighs. Romans viii. 26.—*Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 3.—"*Selah.*" In the end of this verse is put the word "*Selah.*" And it doth note unto the reader or hearer what a miserable and comfortless thing man is in trouble, if God be not present with him to help him. It is also put as a spur and prick for every Christian man and woman to remember and call upon God in the days of their troubles. For as the Jews say, wheresoever this word "*Selah*" is, it doth admonish and stir up the reader or hearer to mark what was said before it; for it is a word always put after very notable sentences.—*John Hooper.*

Verse 4.—"*Thou holdest mine eyes waking.*" Thou art afflicted with want of sleep:—A complaint incident to distempered bodies and thoughtful minds. Oh, how wearisome a thing it is to spend the long night in tossing up and down in a restless bed, in the chase of sleep; which the more eagerly it is followed, flies so much the farther from us! Couldst thou obtain of thyself to forbear the desire of it, perhaps it would come alone: now that thou seest for it, like to some froward guest, it is coy and overly, and punishes thee with thy longing. Lo, he that could command a hundred and seven and twenty provinces, yet could not command rest. 'On that night his sleep departed from him,' Esth. vi. 1, neither could he forced or entreated to his bed. And the great Babylonian monarch, though he had laid some hand on sleep, yet he could not hold it; for "his sleep brake from him," Dan. ii. 1. And, for great and wise Solomon, it would not so much as come within his view. "Neither day nor night seeth he sleep with his eyes," Eccl. viii. 16. Surely, as there is no earthly thing more comfortable to nature than bodily rest (Jer. xxxi. 26); so, there is nothing whose loss is more grievous and disheartening. . . . . Instead of closing thy lids to wait for sleep, lift up thy stiff eyes to him that "giveth his beloved rest," Psalm cxxvii. 2. Whatever be the means, be it is that "*holdeth mine eyes waking.*" He that made thine eyes, keeps off sleep from thy body, for the good of thy soul: let not thine eyes wake, without thy heart. The spouse of Christ can say, "I sleep, but my heart waketh," Cant. v. 2. How much more should she say, "Mine eyes wake, and my heart waketh also!" When thou canst not sleep with thine eyes, labour to see him that is invisible: one glimpse of that sight is more worth than all the sleep that thine eyes can be capable of. Give thyself up into his hands, to be disposed of at his will. What is this sweet acquiescence but the rest of the soul? which if thou canst find in thyself, thou shalt quietly digest the want of thy bodily sleep.—*Joseph Hall, in his "Balm of Gilead."*

Verse 4.—"*I am so troubled that I cannot speak.*" He adds that he was so cut down and lifeless that he could not speak. Little griefs, as it is often said, are uttered, great ones strike us dumb. In great troubles and affrights the spirit fails the exterior members, and flows back to its fountain; the limbs stand motionless, the whole body trembles, the eyes remain fixed, and the tongue forgets its office. Hence it is that Niobe was represented by the poets as turned into a stone. The history of Psammenitus also, in Herodotus, is well known, how over the misfortunes of his children he sat silent and overwhelmed, but when he saw his friend's calamities he bewailed them with bitter tears.—*Mollerus.*

Verse 4.—"*I am so troubled that I cannot speak.*" Sometimes our grief is so violent that it finds no vent, it strangles us, and we are overcome. It is with us in our desertions as with a man that gets a slight hurt; at first he walks up and down, but not looking betimes to prevent a growing mischief, the neglected wound begins to fester, or to gangrene, and brings him to greater pain and loss. So it is with us many times in our spiritual sadness; when we are first troubled, we pray and pour out our souls before the Lord; but afterwards the waters of our grief drown our cries and we are so overwhelmed, that if we might have all the world we cannot pray, or at least we can find no enlargement, no life, no pleasure in our prayers; and God himself seems to take no delight in them, and that makes us more sad, Psalm xxii. 1.—*Timothy Rogers* (1660—1729), *in* "*A Discourse on Trouble of Mind, and the Disease of Melancholy.*"

Verse 4.—"*Troubled.*" Or, *bruised:* the Hebrew word properly signifieth an astonishment caused by some great blow received.—*John Diodati.*

Verse 4.—"*I cannot speak.*" Words are but the body, the garment, the outside of prayer; sighs are nearer the heart work. A dumb beggar getteth an alms at Christ's gates, even by making signs, when his tongue cannot plead for him; and the rather, because he is dumb. *Objection.* I have not so much as a voice to utter to God; and Christ saith, "Cause me to hear thy voice" (Cant. ii. 14). *Answer.* Yea, but some other thing hath a voice beside the tongue: "The Lord has heard the voice of my weeping" (Psalm vi. 8). Tears have a tongue, and grammar, and language, that our Father knoweth. Babes have no prayer for the breast, but weeping: the mother can read hunger in weeping.—*Samuel Rutherford.*

Verse 4.—If through all thy discouragements thy condition prove worse and worse, so that thou canst not pray, but art struck dumb when thou comest into his presence, as David, then fall a-making signs when thou canst not speak; groan, sigh, sob, "chatter," as Hezekiah did; bemoan thyself for thine unworthiness, and desire Christ to speak thy requests for thee, and God to hear him for thee.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 5.—"*The days of old.*" Doubtless to our first parents the darkness of the first night was somewhat strange; persons who had never seen anything but the light of the day, when the shadows of the night first did encompass them, could not be without some apprehension: yet when at the back of a number of nights they had seen the day-spring of the morning light constantly to arise; the darkness of the blackest nights was passed over without fear, and in as great security, as the light of the fairest days. To men who have always lived upon land, when first they set to sea, the winds, waves, and storms are exceeding terrible; but when they are a little beaten with the experience of tempests, their fears do change into resolution and courage. It is of no small use to remember that those things which vex most our spirit, are not new, but have already been in times before our days.—*Robert Baylie's Sermon before the House of Commons.* 1643.

Verse 6.—"*I call to remembrance my song in the night.*" Either, (1) "I will now, in the present night of affliction, remember my former songs." "Though this is a time of distress, and my present circumstances are gloomy, yet I have

known brighter days. He that lifted me up, has cast me down, and we can raise me up again." Sometimes this reflection, indeed, adds a poignancy to our distress, as it did to David's trouble, Ps. xlii. 4. Yet it will bear a better improvement, which he seems to make of it; verse 11, and so Job, (ii. 10.) "*Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?*" And his case shows that after the most sweeping calamities the Lord can again give things a turn in favour of them that hope in him. Therefore, present troubles should not make us forget former comforts, especially as the former so much exceeded our deserts, and the present afflictions fall so short of our demerits. Or, (2) the text may mean, "I will remember how I have been enabled to sing in the former nights of affliction." And surely it is especially seasonable to remember supports and consolations granted under preceding distresses. Elihu complained (Job xxxv. 10), "There is none that saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night." David comforted himself with the thought, "Though deep calleth unto deep, yet the Lord will command his loving-kindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me." Ps. xlii. 8. And the Lord promised by Isaiah (xxx. 29), "Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept." No doubt Paul and Silas remembered their song in the night, when imprisoned at Philippi; and it afforded them encouragement under subsequent trials. And cannot many of you, my brethren, in like manner, remember the supports and consolations you have enjoyed in former difficulties, and how the Lord turned the shadow of death into morning? And ought you not to trust to him that hath delivered, that he will yet deliver? He that hath delivered in six troubles will not forsake you in seven. The "clouds may return after the rain;" but not a drop can fall without the leave of him, who rides on the heavens for your help, and in his excellency on the sky. Did you not forbode at first a very different termination of the former troubles? and did the Lord disappoint your fears, and put a new song into your mouth; and will you not now begin to trust him, and triumph in him? Surely you have found that the Lord can clear the darkest skies. "Light is sown for the righteous," and ere long you shall see an eternal day. If such songs are given to the pilgrims of the night, how shall they sing in that world where the sun shall set no more! There will be no night there.—*John Ryland.* 1753—1825.

Verse 6.—"*I call to remembrance:*" being glad in this scarcity of comfort, to live upon the old store, as bees do in winter.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 6.—"*My song in the night.*" The "songs of the night" is as favourite a word of the Old Testament as "glory in tribulation" is of the New, and it is one of those which prove that both Testaments have the self-same root and spirit.—*John Ker.*

Verse 6.—"*My spirit made diligent search.*" He falls upon self-examination, and searcheth his spirit, to consider why the hand of God was so against him, and why the face of God was so hid from him. Some read it, "I digged into my spirit;" as Ezekiel digged into the wall, to search for and find out the abomination, that made the Lord thus leave him in the dark, and hide his face from him. He searcheth the wound of his spirit; that was another way to cure it. It is a notable way to cure the wounds of the soul, for the soul to search them.—*John Collings.*

Verse 6.—"*My spirit made diligent search.*" The verb חפשׂ, *chaphas*, is such an investigation as a man makes who is obliged to *strip himself* in order to do it; or, *to lift up coverings*, to search fold by fold, or in our own phrase, *to leave no stone unturned.*—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 6.—"*My spirit made diligent search.*" As Ahasuerus, when he could not sleep, called for the records and chronicles of his kingdom, so the doubting soul betakes himself to the records of heaven, the word of God in the Scriptures, and one while he is reading there, another while looking into his heart, if he can find there anything that answers the characters of Scripture-faith, as the face in the glass doth the face of man. David, when he was at a loss what to

think of himself, and many doubts did clog his faith, insomuch that the thinking of God increased his trouble, he did not sit down and let the ship drive, as we say, not regarding whether God loved him or no, but *communes with his own heart, and his spirit makes diligent search.* Thus it is with every sincere soul under doubtings: he dares no more sit down contented in that unresolved condition, than one who thinks he smells fire in his house dares settle himself to sleep till he hath looked in every room and corner, and satisfied himself that all is safe, lest he should be waked with the fire about his ears in the night: and the poor doubting soul is much more afraid, lest it should wake with hell-fire about it: whereas a soul in a state and under the power of unbelief is secure and careless.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 6.—"*Diligent search.*" This duty requires diligence. External acts of religion are facile; to lift up the eye to heaven, to bow the knee, to read a prayer, this requires no more labour than for a papist to tell over his beads; but to examine a man's self, to take the heart all in pieces as a watch, and see what is defective, this is not easy. Reflective acts are hardest. The eye can see everything but itself. It is easy to spy the faults of others, but hard to find out our own.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 8.—"*Doth his promise fail for evermore?*" Let no appearing impossibilities make you question God's accomplishment of any of his gracious words. Though you cannot see how the thing can be done, 'tis enough, if God has said that he will do it. There can be no obstructions to promised salvation, which we need to fear. He who is the God of this salvation, and the Author of the promise, will prepare his own way for the doing of his own work, so that "every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill brought low." Luke iii. 5. Though the valleys be so deep that we cannot see the bottom, and the mountains so high that we cannot see the tops of them, yet God knows how to raise the one and level the other; Isai. lxiii. 1: "I that speak in righteousness (or faithfulness) am mighty to save." If anything would keep back the kingdom of Christ, it would be our infidelity; but he will come, though he should find no faith on the earth. See Rom. iii. 3. Cast not away your confidence because God defers his performances. Though providences run cross, though they move backwards and forwards, you have a sure and faithful word to rely upon. Promises, though they be for a time seemingly delayed, cannot be finally frustrated. Dare not to harbour such a thought within yourselves. The being of God may as well fail as the promise of God. That which does not come in your time, will be hastened in his time, which is always the more convenient season.—*Timothy Cruso.*

Verse 9.—"*Hath God forgotten to be gracious?*" In what pangs couldst thou be, O Asaph, that so woeful a word should fall from thee: "*Hath God forgotten to be gracious?*" Surely, the temptation went so high, that the next step had been blasphemy. Had not that good God, whom thy bold weakness questions for forgetfulness, in great mercies remembered thee, and brought thee speedily to remember thyself and him; that, which thou confessest to have been infirmity, had proved a sinful despair. I dare say for thee, that word washed thy cheeks with many a tear, and was worthy of more; for, O God, what can be so dear to thee, as the glory of thy mercy? There is none of thy blessed attributes, which thou desirest to set forth so much unto the sons of men, and so much abhorrest to be disparaged by our detraction, as thy mercy. Thou canst, O Lord, forget thy displeasure against thy people; thou canst forget our iniquities, and cast our sins out of thy remembrance, Micah vii. 18, 19; but thou canst no more forget to be gracious, than thou canst cease to be thyself. O my God, I sin against thy justice hourly, and thy mercy interposes for my remission: but, oh, keep me from sinning against thy mercy. What plea can I hope for, when I have made my advocate my enemy?—*Joseph Hall.*

Verse 9.—"*Hath God forgotten to be gracious?*" The poor child crieth after the mother. What shall I do for my mother! Oh, my mother, my mother, what shall I do for my mother! And it may be the mother stands behind the back of the child, only she hides herself, to try the affection of the child: so the poor soul cries after God, and complains, Oh, my Father! my Father: Where is my heavenly Father? Hath he forgotten to be gracious? Hath he shut up his loving-kindness in displeasure? when, (all the while), God is nearer than they think for, shining upon them in "a spirit of grace and supplications," with sighs and "groans that cannot be uttered." Thus the gracious woman, Mary Magdelene, she seeks after Christ, she enquires, she cries after him, and weeps: My dear Saviour, my dear Lord and Master, he is "taken out of the sepulchre, and I know not where they have laid him!" Thus she complains to the disciples, and thus she complains to the angels, when Christ stood at her very back and overheard all: nay, when she turned her about and saw him, yet at first she did not know him, nay, when he spoke to her and she to him, yet she knew him not, but thought he had been the gardener, John xx. 15. Thus is it with many a gracious soul; though God speaks home to their hearts in his Word, and they speak to him by prayer, and they cannot say but the Spirit "*helps their infirmities;*" yet they complain for want of his presence, as if there were nothing of God in them.—*Matthew Lawrence.*

Verse 9.—"*Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?*" The metaphor here is taken from a *spring*, the mouth of which is closed, so that its waters can no longer run in the same channel; but, being confined, break out and take some other course. Wilt thou take thy mercy from the Israelites and give it to some other people?—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 9.—"*Selah.*" Thus was he going on with his dark and dismal apprehensions, when on a sudden he first checked himself with that word, "*Selah;*" stop there; go no further; let us hear no more of these unbelieving surmises; and he then chid himself, verse 10: "This is mine infirmity."—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 10.—"*This is my infirmity.*" Literally, this is my disease,—which appears to mean, This is my lot and I must bear it; lo! it is a partial evil, for which the equity of God's government should not be questioned. The authorised version, "*This is my infirmity,*" suggests, perhaps advisedly, another signification, viz., These thoughts are but hallucinations of my agony,—but to this gloss I should scruple to commit myself.—*C. B. Cayley.*

Verse 10.—It is the "*infirmity*" of a believer to be thinking of himself, and drawing false inferences (for *all* such inferences are necessarily erroneous), from what he sees or feels, as to the light in which he is beheld and estimated on the part of God. It is his *strength*, on the other hand, to remember the right hand of the Most High—to meditate upon the changeless truth and mercy of that God who has committed himself in holiness to the believing sinner's sure salvation, by causing the son of his love to suffer in our stead the dread reality of penal death.—*Arthur Pridham.*

Verse 10.—"*Infirmity.*" An "*infirmity*" is this,—some sickness or indisposition of the soul, that arises from the weakness of grace. Or an infirmity is this,—when the purpose and inclination of the heart is upright, but a man wants strength to perform that purpose; when "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. xxvi. 41); when a man can say with the apostle, "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not," Rom. vii. 18. When the bent and inclination of the soul is right, but either through some violence of corruption or strength of temptation, a man is divorced and turned out of the way. As the needle in the seaman's compass, you know if it be right it will stand always northwards, the heat of it will be toward the North Pole, but being jogged and troubled it may sometimes be put out of frame and order, yet the bent and inclination of it is still northward; this is an infirmity.—*James Nalton.* 1664

Verse 10.—It is unnecessary to state all the renderings which the learned have given of this verse. It is unquestionably ambiguous, as the word חלותי may be derived from different roots, which have different significations. I derive it from חול or חָלַל which signifies to be *in pain* as a woman in labour, and as it is in the infinitive, I render it, "*the time of my sorrow* or *pain*." The next term, שְׁנוֹת, I derive from שָׁנָה *to change*, as the Chaldee does, Ainsworth, Hammond, and others; and I render potentially. I consider the whole as a beautiful metaphor. The author considers himself as in distress, like a woman in travail; and like her, hopes soon to have his sorrow turned to joy. He confides in God's power to effect such a change; and hence naturally recollects the past instances of God's favour to his people.—*Benjamin Boothroyd.*

Verse 10.—"*I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.*" Not the moments, nor the hours, nor days of a few short afflictions, that his left hand hath dealt to me: but the "*years of his right hand;*" those long, large, and boundless mercies wherewith he hath comforted me.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 10.—"*I will remember the years,*" etc. The words in the Hebrew text are *shenoth jemin gneljon*, which I find to be variously rendered and translated by interpreters. I shall not trouble you with them all at this present time, but only take notice of two of them, which I conceive are the principal and most comprehensive; the one is of our oldest English translation, and the other of our last and newest; the former reads the words thus: "*The right hand of the Most High can change all this.*" The latter reads the words thus, as we have it now before us, "*I will remember the years,*" etc. The main ground of this variation is the different exposition of the Hebrew word *shenoth*, which may be translated either *to change*, from the *verb* in the *infinitive mood*, or else may be translated *years*, from the *noun* in the *plural number*. This hath given the occasion to this difference and variety of translation, but the sense is very good and agreeable which way soever we take it—

First, take it according to the *former* translation, as it does exhibit to us the power of God. "*The right hand of the Lord can change all this.*" This was that whereby David did support himself in his present affliction; that the Lord was able *to change and alter* this his condition to him, and that *for the better.* . . . . For the second sense here before us, that's this: "*I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High;*" where the word "*remember*" is borrowed from the next following verse, to supply the sense of this, as otherwise being not in the text. Now here the prophet David fetches a ground of comfort from God's *practice*, as before he did from his *power;* there, from what God *could* do; here, from what he had done already in former time, and ages, and generations.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 11.—"*I will remember,*" etc. *Remember* and *commemorate*, as the Hebrew (by a double reading) importeth.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 11.—"*I will remember.*" Faith is a considering grace: he that believes will not make haste; no, not to think or speak of God. Faith hath a good memory, and can tell the Christian many stories of ancient mercies; and when his present meal falls short, it can entertain the soul with a cold dish, and not complain that God keeps a bad house. Thus David recovered himself, when he was even tumbling down the hill of temptation: "*This is my infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. I will remember thy wonders of old.*" Therefore, Christian, when thou art in the depths of affliction, and Satan tempts thee to asperse God, as if he were forgetful of thee, stop his mouth with this: No, Satan, God hath not forgot to do for me, but I have forgot what he hath done for me, or else I could not question his fatherly care at present over me. Go, Christian, play over thy own lessons, praise God for past mercies, and it will not be long before thou hast a new song put into thy mouth for a present mercy. . . . . .

Sometimes a little writing is found in a man's study that helps to save his estate, for want of which he had gone to prison; and some one experience remembered keeps the soul from despair, a prison which the devil longs to have the Christian in. "This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope," Lam. iii. 21. David was famous for his hope, and not less eminent for his care to observe and preserve the experiences he had of God's goodness. He was able to recount the dealings of God with him; they were so often the subject of his meditation and matter of his discourse, that he had made them familiar to him. When his hope is at a loss, he doth but exercise his memory a little, and he recovers himself presently, and chides himself for his weakness. "*I said, this is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.*" The hound, when he hath lost the scent, hunts backward and so recovers it, and pursues his game with louder cry than ever. Thus, Christian, when thy hope is at a loss, and thou questionest thy salvation in another world, then look backward and see what God hath already done for thee. Some promises have their day of payment here, and others we must stay to receive in heaven. Now the payment which God makes of some promises here, is an earnest given to our faith that the others also shall be faithfully discharged when their date expires; as every judgment inflicted here on the wicked is sent as a pledge of that wrath the full sum whereof God will make up in hell.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 11.—"*The works of the Lord.*" . . . . "*Thy wonders.*" The psalmist does not mean to draw a distinction between the *works* and the *wonders* of God; but, rather, to state that all God's works are wonders. . . . . all, whether in providence or grace—all God's works are wonderful. If we take the individual experience of the Christian, of what is that experience made up? Of wonders. The work of his conversion, wonderful!—arrested in a course of thoughtlessness and impiety; graciously sought and gently compelled to be at peace with God, whose wrath he had provoked. The communication of knowledge, wonderful!—Deity and eternity gradually piled up; the Bible taken page by page, and each page made a volume which no searching can exhaust. The assistance in warfare, wonderful!—himself a child of corruption, yet enabled to grapple with the world, the flesh, and the devil, and often to trample them under foot. The solaces in affliction, wonderful!—sorrow sanctified so as to minister to joy, and a harvest of gladness reaped from a field which has been watered with tears. The foretastes of heaven, wonderful!—angels bringing down the clusters of the land, and the spirit walking with lightsome tread the crystal river and the streets of gold. All wonderful! Wonderful that the Spirit should strive with man; wonderful that God should bear with his backslidings; wonderful that God should love him notwithstanding his pollution; wonderful that God should persist in saving him, in spite, as it were, of himself. Oh! those amongst you who know anything, experimentally, of salvation through Christ, well know that the work is wonderful in its commencement, wonderful in its continuance, and they will need no argument to vindicate the transition from "*works*" to "*wonders.*" It will be the transition of your own thoughts and your own feelings, and you will never give in the record of God's dealings with yourselves without passing, as the psalmist passed, from mentioning to ascription. Ye may set yourselves to commemorate God's "*works,*" ye will find yourselves extolling God's "*wonders.*" Ye may begin with saying, "*I will remember the works of the Lord;*" but ye will conclude by exclaiming, "*Surely I will remember thy wonders of old.*"—*Henry Melvill.*

Verse 11.—"*Thy wonders.*" The word is in the singular here, and also in verse 14. So also in the next verse, "*Thy work,*" because the one great wonder, the one great work in which all others were included, is before his thoughts.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 11.—"*Thy wonders.*" He had before spoken to others, but here he turns to God. It is good for a soul in a hard exercise, to raise itself from thinking of God and of his works, unto speaking unto God directly: no ease or relief will be found till address be made unto himself, till we turn our face

toward him and direct our speech unto him, as here the psalmist doth, from the midst of the eleventh verse to the end of the psalm.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 13.—"*Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary.*" The word "*sanctuary*" is to be taken either for heaven or for the temple. I am rather inclined to refer it to heaven, conceiving the meaning to be, that the ways of God rise high above the world, so that if we are truly desirous to know them, we must ascend above all heavens. Although the works of God are in part manifest to us, yet all our knowledge of them comes far short of their immeasurable height. Besides, it is to be observed, that none enjoy the least taste of his works but those who by faith rise up to heaven. And yet, the utmost point to which we can ever attain is, to contemplate with admiration and reverence the hidden wisdom and power of God, which, while they shine forth in his works, yet far surpass the limited powers of our understanding.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 13.—"*Thy way is in the sanctuary.*" That is, every one of the elect may and ought to learn in thy church the conduct and proceedings of thy providence towards those that were thine.—*John Diodati.*

Verses 13, 19.—"*In the sanctuary*" and "*In the sea.*" *His* "*way*" is "*in the sanctuary,*" and *His* "*way*" is "*in the sea.*" Now there is a great difference between these two things. First of all, God's way is in the *sanctuary*, where all is *light*, all is *clear*. There is no mistake there. There is nothing, in the least degree, that is a harass to the spirit. On the contrary, it is when the poor, troubled one enters into the sanctuary, and views things there in the light of God, that he sees the end of all else—everything that is entangled, the end of which he cannot find on the earth. But not only is God's way in the sanctuary (and when we are there, all is bright and happy); but God's way is in the "*sea.*" He walks *where we cannot always trace his footsteps.* God moves mysteriously by times, as we all know. There are ways of God which are purposely to try us. I need not say that it is not at all as if God had pleasure in our perplexities. Nor is it as if we had no sanctuary to draw near to, where we can rise above it. But, still, there is a great deal in the ways of God that must be left entirely in his own hands. The way of God is thus not only in the sanctuary, but also in the sea. And yet, what we find even in connection with his footsteps being in the sea is, "Thou leddest thy people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron." That was through the sea; afterwards, it was through the wilderness. But it had been through the sea. The beginnings of the ways of God with his people were there; because, from first to last, God must be the confidence of the saint. It may be an early lesson of his soul, but it never ceases to be the thing to learn. How happy to know that, while the sanctuary is open to us, yet God himself is nearer still—and to him we are brought now. As it is said (1 Pet. iii), "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." This is a most precious thing; because there we are in the sanctuary at once, and brought to God himself. And I am bold to say, that heaven itself would be but a small matter if it were not to God that we are brought. It is better than any freedom from trial—better than any blessing, to be in the presence of the One we belong to; who is himself the source of all blessing and joy. That we are brought to him now is infinitely precious. There we are in the sanctuary brought to God. But, still, there are other ways of God outside the sanctuary—"*In the sea.*" And there we often find ourselves at a loss. If we are occupied with the sea itself, and with trying to scan God's footsteps there, then "*they are not known.*" But confidence in God himself is always the strength of faith. May the Lord grant us increasing simplicity and quietness in the midst of all that we pass through, for his name's sake.—*From* "*Things New and Old.*" 1865.

Verse 14.—"*Thou God that doest wonders.*" If he said, *Thou art the God that hast done wonders*, it would be plain that he spake only of those ancient miracles which were wrought in former days: but now that he saith, *Thou art*

the God that doest wonders, he evidently refers to those wonderful works, which he is doing now, and shall not cease to do even to the end of the world —*Gerhohus.*

Verse 15.—"*The sons of Jacob and Joseph.*" The distinction between the sons of Jacob and Joseph is not meaningless. For by the sons of Jacob or Israel the believing Jews are properly intended, those that trace their descent to him not only according to the flesh but according to faith. Of whom although *Joseph* was one, yet since he was sold by his brethren and after many sufferings among foreign tribes raised to high rank, it is highly congruous to distinguish him from the sons of *Jacob*, and he is fitly regarded as a prince of the Gentiles apart from *Jacob's* sons, who sold him.—*Gerhohus.*

Verse 15.—"*The sons of Jacob and Joseph.*" Was it Joseph or was it Jacob that begat the children of Israel? Certainly Jacob begat; but as Joseph nourished them, they are called by his name also.—*Talmud*

Verse 16.—"*The waters saw thee, O God*," etc. "The waters of the Red Sea," says Bishop Horne, "are here beautifully represented as endued with sensibility; as seeing, feeling, and being confounded, even to the lowest depths, at the presence and power of their great Creator, when he commanded them to open a way, and to form a wall on each side of it, until his people were passed over." This in fact is true poetry; and in this attributing of life, spirit, feeling, action, and suffering to inanimate objects, there are no poets who can vie with those of the Hebrew nation.—*Richard Mant.*

Verse 16.—"*The depths also were troubled.*" The *depths* are mentioned in addition to the *waters*, to shew that the dominion and power of God reach not only to the surface of the waters, but penetrate to the most profound abysses, and agitate and restrain the waters from their lowest bottom.—*Mollerus.*

Verses 16—18.—The waters saw thee, but men do not see thee. The depths were troubled, but men say in their heart, There is no God. The clouds poured out water, but men pour not out cries and tears unto God. The skies send out a sound, but men say not, Where is God my Maker? Thine arrows also went abroad, but no arrows of contrition and supplication are sent back by men in return. The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven, but men hear not the louder thunders of the law. The lightnings lightened the world, but the light of truth shines in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not. The earth trembled and shook, but human hearts remain unmoved.

"My heart it shakes not at the wrath
And terrors of a God."

—*George Rogers.*

Verses 16—19.—As soon as ever the whole Egyptian army was within it, the sea flowed to its own place, and came down with a torrent raised by storms of wind, and encompassed the Egyptians. Showers of rain also came down from the sky, and dreadful thunders and lightning, with flashes of fire. Thunderbolts also were darted upon them; nor was there anything which used to be sent by God upon men, as indications of his wrath, which did not happen at this time; for a dark and dismal night oppressed them. And thus did all these men perish, so that there was not one man left to be a messenger of this calamity to the rest of the Egyptians.—*Josephus.*

Verse 19.—"*Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters*," etc. Until lately, not much was known of oceanic currents, nor of their influence on the condition of particular localities and the intercourse of man with man. They are now seen to be the "*way*" or "*path*" *of the Creator* "*in the great waters.*" Numerous agencies tend to the production of these currents. Amongst them we may reckon the propagation of the tide wave in its progress over the globe, the duration and strength of certain winds, the variation in density which sea-water undergoes in different latitudes and at different

depths, by change of temperature, and the quantity of salt it contains, and by the hourly alterations of atmospheric pressure which take place within the tropics. The oceanic currents are nearly constant in breadth, crossing the sea in many directions. Long bands of seaweed carried by the currents shew at once their velocity, and the line of demarcation between the waters at rest and the waters in motion. Between the tropics there is a general movement of the sea from east to west, called the equatorial current, supposed to be due to the trade winds, and the progress of the tide wave. There are narrower currents carrying warm water to higher and cold water to lower latitudes.—*Edwin Sidney, in "Conversations on the Bible and Science."* 1866.

Verse 19.—"*Thy way is in the sea*," where no man can wade, except God be before him, but where any man may walk if God take him by the hand and lead him through.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 19.—"*Thy footsteps are not known.*" He often goeth so much out of our sight, that we are unable to give an account of what he doeth, or what he is about to do. Frequently the pillar of divine providence is dark throughout, to Israelites as well as Egyptians; so that his own people understand not the riddles, till he is pleased to be his own interpreter, and to lead them into his secrets.—*Samuel Slater* (—1704), *in "The Morning Exercises."*

Verse 19.—"*Thy footsteps are not known.*" That is, they are not always known; or, they are not known in all things; yea, they are not altogether known in anything.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 19.—"*Thy footsteps are not known.*" Upon some affair of great consequence, which had occurred in some providential dispensations, Luther was very importunate at the throne of grace to know the mind of God in it; and it seemed to him as if he heard God speak to his heart thus: "I am not to be traced." Referring to this incident, one adds, "If he is not to be traced, he may be trusted;" and that religion is of little value which will not enable a man to trust God where he can neither trace nor see him. But there is a time for everything beneath the sun, and the Almighty has his 'times and seasons.' It has been frequently with my hopes and desires, in regard to providence, as with my watch and the sun, which has often been ahead of true time; I have gone faster than providence, and have been forced to stand still and wait, or I have been set back painfully. That was a fine sentiment of Flavel, "Some providences, like Hebrew letters, must be read backwards."—*Quoted in "Christian Treasury,"* 1849. *Author not mentioned.*

Verse 19.—See also notes on verse 13.

Verse 20.—"*Thou leddest thy people like a flock*," etc. From this verse the afflicted may learn many consolations. First, that the best people that be are no better able to resist temptation, than the simple sheep is able to withstand the brier that catcheth him. The next, that man is of no more ability to beware of temptations, than the poor sheep is to avoid the brier, being preserved only by the diligence of the shepherd. The third, that as the shepherd is careful of his entangled and briered sheep, so is God of his afflicted faithful. And the fourth is, that the people of Israel could take no harm of the water, because they entered the sea at God's commandment. Whereof we learn, that no danger can hurt when God doth command us to enter into it; and all dangers overcome us if we choose them ourselves, besides God's commandment; as Peter, when he went at God's commandment upon the water, took no hurt; but when he entered into the bishop's house upon his own presumption, was overcome and denied Christ. The Israelites, when they fought at God's commandment, the peril was nothing; but when they would do it of their own heads, they perished: so that we are bound to attend upon God's commandment, and then no danger shall destroy us, though it pain us. The other doctrine is in this, that God used the ministry of Moses and Aaron in the deliverance of his people, who did command them to do nothing but that the Lord did first bid. Whereof we learn that such as be ministers appointed of God, and do nothing but as God

commandeth, are to be followed; as Paul saith, "Follow me, as I follow Christ."—*John Hooper.*

Verse 20.—"*Thou leddest thy people like a flock.*" Observe, the good shepherd leads his followers *like sheep:* First, with great solicitude and care, to protect them from wolves. Secondly, with consideration and kindness, for the sheep is a harmless animal. Thirdly, with a wise strictness, for sheep easily wander, and they are of all animals the most stupid.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 20.—"*Leddest thy people.*" Our guiding must be mild and gentle, else it is not *duxisti*, but *traxisti;* drawing and driving, and no leading. *Leni spiritu non dura manu*, rather by an inward sweet influence to be led, than by an outward extreme violence to be forced forward. So did God lead his people here. Not the greatest pace, I wis, for they were a year marching that they might have posted in eleven days, as Moses saith. (Deut. i. 2.) No nor yet the nearest way neither, as Moses telleth us. (Ex. xiii. 18.) For he fetched a compass divers times, as all wise governors by his example must do, that desire rather safely to lead, than hastily to drive forward. "The Spirit of God leadeth this people," saith Isaiah (ch. lxiii. 14) "as an horse is ridden down the hill into a valley;" which must not be at a gallop, lest horse and ruler both come down one over another; but warily and easily.—*Lancelot Andrewes.*

Verse 20.—"*By the hand of Moses and Aaron.*" He says not, Moses and Aaron led the people of Israel; but, *Thou* leddest the people, and that *thy* people, by the hand of Moses and Aaron. Great was the power of these two men; nevertheless neither of them was the shepherd of the sheep, but each was a servant to the one and only true shepherd, to whom the sheep exclusively belonged. Nor yet was either the leader of the sheep, but the shepherd himself was present and led his own flock, to whom these two acted as servants. There are therefore three things to be learned from this passage. First, the sheep do not belong to the servants, but to the true shepherd. Secondly, the true shepherd is the leader of his own sheep. Thirdly, the office of Moses and Aaron was to attend to this duty, that the Lord's sheep should be properly led and pastured. So Christ himself leads the sheep, his own sheep, and for this work he employs the ministry of his servants.—*Musculus.*

Verse 20.—The psalmist has reached the climax of his strain, he has found relief from his sorrow by forcing his thoughts into another channel, by dwelling on all God's mightiest wonders of old; but there he must end: in his present intensity of passion he cannot trust himself to draw forth in detail any mere *lessons* of comfort. There are seasons when even the holiest faith cannot bear to listen to words of reasoning; though it can still find a support whereon to rest, in the simple contemplation, in all their native grandeur, of the deeds that God hath wrought.—*Joseph Francis Thrupp.*

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—The benefit of using the voice in private prayer.

Verses 1, 3, 5, 10.—Note the wise man's progress out of his soul trouble. I. I cried. II. I remembered. III. I considered. IV. I said.

Verse 2.—See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 853. "A Sermon for the Most Miserable of Men."

Verse 2.—I. Special prayer: "In the day," etc. II. Persevering prayer: hands lifted up to God by night as well as by day. III. Agonising prayer: "my soul refused to be comforted," until the answer came. "Being in an agony, he prayed," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 2 (*last clause*).—When this is wise, and when it is censurable.

Verse 4.—I. A good man cannot rest in his bed until [illegible] II. He cannot speak freely to others until [illegible]—*G. R.*

Verse 4.—Occupation for the sleepless, and consolation for the [illegible]

Verses 5, 6.—There are four rules for obtaining comfort in affliction. I. The consideration of God's goodness to his people of old. II. Remembrance of our own past experience. III. Self-examination. IV. The diligent study of the word.—*G. R.*

Verse 6.—"*Remembrance.*" A good memory is very helpful and useful. 1. It is a great means of *knowledge:* for what signifies your reading or hearing, if you remember nothing? 2. It is a means of *faith:* 1 Cor. xv. 2. 3. It is a means of *comfort.* If a poor Christian in distress could remember God's promises they would inspire him with new life; but when they are forgotten, his spirits sink. 4. It is a means of *thankfulness.* 5. It is a means of *hope;* for "experience worketh hope" (Rom. v. 4), and the memory is the storehouse of experience. 6. It is a means of *repentance;* for, how can we repent or mourn for what we have forgotten? 7. It is a means of *usefulness.* When one spark of grace is truly kindled in the heart, it will quickly endeavour to heat others also.—*R. Steele.*

Verse 7 (*first clause*).—To place the question in a strong light, let us consider, I. Of whom is the question raised? "the Lord." II. What course of action is in question? "cast off for ever." III. Towards whom would the action be performed?

Verse 8.—These questions, I. Suppose a change in the immutable Jehovah in two glorious attributes. II. Are contrary to all past evidence. III. Can only arise from the flesh and Satan; and, therefore, IV. Are to be met in the power of the Spirit, with strong faith in the Eternal God.

Verse 10.—A confession applicable to many other matters. Such as, fear of death, fear of desertion, dread of public service, sensitiveness of neglect, etc.

Verse 10.—"*My infirmity.*" Different meanings of this word. These would furnish a good subject. Some infirmities are to be patiently endured, others gloried in, others taken in prayer to God for his Spirit's help, and others lamented and repented of.

Verses 10, 11, 12.—Remember, meditate, talk.

Verses 11, 12.—I. Consolation derived from the remembrance of the past. II. Consolation increased by meditation. III. Consolation strengthened by communication: "and talk," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 12.—Themes for thought and topics for conversation. Creation, Providence, Redemption, &c.

Verses 13, 19.—"*In the sea,*" "*in the sanctuary.*" God's way incomprehensible, though undoubtedly right: in his holiness lies the answer to its enigmas.

Verse 14.—*Thaumaturgeis,* or the Great Wonder-worker.

Verse 15.—"*And Joseph.*" The honour of nourishing those who have been begotten of God by other men's labours.

Verse 15.—Redemption by power, the consequence, evidence, and necessary attendant of redemption by price.

Verse 15.—I. The redeemed: "thy people;" "the sons of," etc. 1. In captivity though they are his people. 2. His people though they are in captivity. II. The redemption: from Egyptian bondage. III. The Redeemer: "Thou, with thine arm," etc. God by Christ, his arm: "Mine own arm brought," etc. "To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" etc.—*G. R.*

Verses 16—18.—I. The homage of nature to the God of grace. II. Its subserviency to his designs.—*G. R.*

Verse 19.—1. The ways of God to men are peculiar: "in the sea:" "thy path," etc. II. They are uniform, they lie in regular "footsteps." III. They are inscrutable: like the path of the ship upon the waters, not of the ploughshare on the land.

Verse 19.—God's way is in the sea. In things changeable, ungovernable, vast, unfathomable, terrible, overwhelming, the Lord has the ruling power.

Verse 20.—1. The subjects of divine guidance: "thy people." II. The manner of their guidance "like a flock"—separated, united, dependent. III. The

agents employed: "by the hand" the Great Shepherd leads by the hand of under-shepherds. "May every under shepherd keep his eye intent on Thee." — *G. R.*

Verse 20. — Church history. I. The church a flock. II. God seen as leading it on. III. Instrumentality always used.

WORK ON THE SEVENTY-SEVENTH PSALM.

"*An Exposition upon the Seventy-seventh Psalm, made by the constant Martyr of Christ, Master John Hooper, Bishop of Glocester and Worcester.*" In the "Later Writings of Bishop Hooper" [in Parker Society's Publications, and also in the "British Reformers" series of the Religious Tract Society.]

PSALM LXXVIII.

TITLE.—Maschil of Asaph. *This is rightly entitled an instructive Psalm. It is not a mere recapitulation of important events in Israelitish history, but is intended to be viewed as a parable setting forth the conduct and experience of believers in all ages. It is a singular proof of the obtuseness of mind of many professors that they will object to sermons and expositions upon the historical parts of Scripture, as if they contained no instruction in spiritual matters: were such persons truly enlightened by the Spirit of God, they would perceive that all Scripture is profitable, and would blush at their own folly in undervaluing any portion of the inspired volume.*

DIVISION.—*The unity is well maintained throughout, but, for the sake of the reader's convenience, we may note that verses* 1—8 *may be viewed as a preface, setting forth the psalmist's object in the epic which he is composing. From* 9—41 *the theme is Israel in the wilderness; then intervenes an account of the Lord's preceding goodness towards his people in bringing them out of Egypt by plagues and wonders,* 42—52. *The history of the tribes is resumed at verse* 53, *and continued to verse* 66, *where we reach the time of the removal of the ark to Zion, and the transference of the leadership of Israel from Ephraim to Judah, which is rehearsed in song from verses* 67—72.

EXPOSITION.

GIVE ear, O my people, *to* my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

2 I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:

3 Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.

4 We will not hide *them* from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.

5 For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children:

6 That the generation to come might know *them*, *even* the children *which* should be born; *who* should arise and declare *them* to their children:

7 That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:

8 And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation *that* set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.

1. "*Give ear, O my people, to my law.*" The inspired bard calls on his countrymen to give heed to his patriotic teaching. We naturally expect God's chosen nation to be first in hearkening to his voice. When God gives his truth a tongue, and sends forth his messengers trained to declare his word with power, it is the least we can do to give them our ears and the earnest obedience of our hearts. Shall God speak, and his children refuse to hear? His teaching has the force of law, let us yield both ear and heart to it. "*Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.*" Give earnest attention, bow your stiff

necks, lean forward to catch every syllable. We are at this day, as readers of the sacred records, bound to study them deeply, exploring their meaning, and labouring to practise their teaching. As the officer of an army commences his drill by calling for "Attention," even so every trained soldier of Christ is called upon to give ear to his words. Men lend their ears to music, how much more then should they listen to the harmonies of the gospel; they sit enthralled in the presence of an orator, how much rather should they yield to the eloquence of heaven.

2. "*I will open my mouth in a parable.*" Analogies are not only to be imagined, but are intended by God to be traced between the story of Israel and the lives of believers. Israel was ordained to be a type; the tribes and their marchings are living allegories traced by the hand of an all-wise providence. Unspiritual persons may sneer about fancies and mysticisms, but Paul spake well when he said "which things are an allegory," and Asaph in the present case spake to the point when he called his narrative "a parable." That such was his meaning is clear from the quotation, "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."—Matthew xiii. 34, 35. "*I will utter dark sayings of old;*"—enigmas of antiquity, riddles of yore. The mind of the poet-prophet was so full of ancient lore that he poured it forth in a copious stream of song, while beneath the gushing flood lay pearls and gems of spiritual truth, capable of enriching those who could dive into the depths and bring them up. The letter of this song is precious, but the inner sense is beyond all price. Whereas the first verse called for attention, the second justifies the demand by hinting that the outer sense conceals an inner and hidden meaning, which only the thoughtful will be able to perceive.

3. "*Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.*" Tradition was of the utmost service to the people of God in the olden time, before the more sure word of prophecy had become complete and generally accessible. The receipt of truth from the lips of others laid the instructed believer under solemn obligation to pass on the truth to the next generation. Truth, endeared to us by its fond associations with godly parents and venerable friends, deserves of us our best exertions to preserve and propagate it. Our fathers told us, we heard them, and we know personally what they taught; it remains for us in our turn to hand it on. Blessed be God we have now the less mutable testimony of written revelation, but this by no means lessens our obligation to instruct our children in divine truth by word of mouth: rather, with such a gracious help, we ought to teach them far more fully the things of God. Dr. Doddridge owed much to the Dutch tiles and his mother's explanations of the Bible narratives. The more of parental teaching the better; ministers and Sabbath-school teachers were never meant to be substitutes for mothers' tears and fathers' prayers.

4. "*We will not hide them from their children.*" Our negligent silence shall not deprive our own and our father's offspring of the precious truth of God, it would be shameful indeed if we did so. "*Shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord.*" We will look forward to future generations, and endeavour to provide for their godly education. It is the duty of the church of God to maintain, in fullest vigour, every agency intended for the religious education of the young; to them we must look for the church of the future, and as we sow towards them so shall we reap. Children are to be taught to magnify the Lord; they ought to be well informed as to His wonderful doings in ages past, and should be made to know "*his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.*" The best education is education in the best things. The first lesson for a child should be concerning his mother's God. Teach him what you will, if he learn not the fear of the Lord, he will perish for lack of knowledge. Grammar is poor food for the soul if it be not

flavoured with grace. Every satchel should have a Bible in it. The world may teach secular knowledge alone, 'tis all she has a heart to know, but the church must not deal so with her offspring; she should look well to every Timothy, and see to it that from a child he knows the Holy Scriptures. Around the fire-side fathers should repeat not only the Bible records, but the deeds of the martyrs and reformers, and moreover the dealings of the Lord with themselves both in providence and grace. We dare not follow the vain and vicious traditions of the apostate church of Rome, neither would we compare the fallible record of the best human memories with the infallible written word, yet would we fain see oral tradition practised by every Christian in his family, and children taught cheerfully by word of mouth by their own mothers and fathers, as well as by the printed pages of what they too often regard as dull, dry task books. What happy hours and pleasant evenings have children had at their parents' knees as they have listened to some "sweet story of old." Reader, if you have children, mind you do not fail in this duty.

5. "*For he established a testimony in Jacob.*" The favoured nation existed for the very purpose of maintaining God's truth in the midst of surrounding idolatry. Theirs were the oracles, they were the conservators and guardians of the truth. "*And appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children.*" The testimony for the true God was to be transmitted from generation to generation by the careful instruction of succeeding families. We have the command for this oral transmission very frequently given in the Pentateuch, and it may suffice to quote one instance from Deut. vi. 7: "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Reader, if you are a parent, have you conscientiously discharged this duty?

6. "*That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born.*" As far on as our brief life allows us to arrange, we must industriously provide for the godly nurture of youth. The narratives, commands, and doctrines of the word of God are not worn out; they are calculated to exert an influence as long as our race shall exist. "*Who should arise and declare them to their children.*" The one object aimed at is transmission; the testimony is only given that it may be passed on to succeeding generations.

7. "*That they might set their hope in God.*" Faith cometh by hearing. Those who know the name of the Lord will set their hope in him, and that they may be led to do so is the main end of all spiritual teaching. "*And not forget the works of God.*" Grace cures bad memories; those who soon forget the merciful works of the Lord have need of teaching; they require to learn the divine art of holy memory. "*But keep his commandments.*" Those who forget God's works are sure to fail in their own. He who does not keep God's love in memory is not likely to remember his law. The design of teaching is practical; holiness towards God is the end we aim at, and not the filling of the head with speculative notions.

8. "*And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation.*" There was room for improvement. Father stubborn in their own way, and rebellious against God's way, are sorry examples for their children; and it is earnestly desired that better instruction may bring forth a better race. It is common in some regions for men to count their family custom as the very best rule; but disobedience is not to be excused because it is hereditary. The leprosy was none the less loathsome because it had been long in the family. If our fathers were rebellious we must be better than they were, or else we shall perish as they did "*A generation that set not their heart aright.*" They had no decision for righteousness and truth. In them there was no preparedness, or willingness of heart, to entertain the Saviour; neither judgments, nor mercies could bind their affections to their God; they were fickle as the winds, and changeful as the waves. "*And whose spirit was not stedfast with God.*" The tribes in the wilderness were constant only in their inconstancy; there was no depending

upon them. It was, indeed, needful that their descendants should be warned, so that they might not blindly imitate them. How blessed would it be if each age improved upon its predecessor; but, alas! it is to be feared that decline is more general than progress, and too often the heirs of true saints are far more rebellious than even their fathers were in their unregeneracy. May the reading of this patriotic and divine song move many to labour after the elevation of themselves and their posterity.

9 The children of Ephraim, *being* armed, *and* carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.

10 They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law;

11 And forgat his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them.

12 Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, *in* the field of Zoan.

13 He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap.

14 In the daytime also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire.

15 He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave *them* drink as *out of* the great depths.

16 He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.

17 And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most High in the wilderness.

18 And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust.

19 Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?

20 Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?

21 Therefore the LORD heard *this*, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel;

22 Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation:

23 Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven,

24 And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven.

25 Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full.

26 He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind.

27 He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea:

28 And he let *it* fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations.

29 So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire;
30 They were not estranged from their lust. But while their meat *was* yet in their mouths,
31 The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen *men* of Israel.
32 For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works.
33 Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble.
34 When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and enquired early after God.
35 And they remembered that God *was* their rock, and the high God their redeemer.
36 Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.
37 For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.
38 But he, *being* full of compassion, forgave *their* iniquity, and destroyed *them* not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.
39 For he remembered that they *were but* flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.
40 How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, *and* grieve him in the desert!
41 Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.

9. "*The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.*" Well equipped and furnished with the best weapons of the times, the leading tribe failed in faith and courage and retreated before the foe. There were several particular instances of this, but probably the psalmist refers to the general failure of Ephraim to lead the tribes to the conquest of Canaan. How often have we also, though supplied with every gracious weapon, failed to wage successful war against our sins, we have marched onward gallantly enough till the testing hour has come, and then "in the day of battle" we have proved false to good resolutions and holy obligations. How altogether vain is unregenerate man! Array him in the best that nature and grace can supply, he still remains a helpless coward in the holy war, so long as he lacks a loyal faith in his God.

10. "*They kept not the covenant of God.* Vows and promises were broken, idols were set up, and the living God was forsaken. They were brought out of Egypt in order to be a people separated unto the Lord, but they fell into the sins of other nations, and did not maintain a pure testimony for the one only true God. "*And refused to walk in his law.*" They gave way to fornication, and idolatry, and other violations of the decalogue, and were often in a state of rebellion against the benign theocracy under which they lived. They had pledged themselves at Sinai to keep the law, and then they wilfully disobeyed it, and so became covenant-breakers.

11. "*And forgat his works, and his wonders that he had showed them.*" Had they remembered them they would have been filled with gratitude and inspired with holy awe: but the memory of God's mercies to them was as soon effaced

as if written upon water. Scarcely could one generation retain the sense of the divine presence in miraculous power, the succeeding race needed a renewal of the extraordinary manifestations, and even then was not satisfied without many displays thereof. Ere we condemn them, let us repent of our own wicked forgetfulness, and confess the many occasions upon which we also have been unmindful of past favours.

12. Egypt, here called *the field of Zoan*, was the scene of marvellous things which were done in open day *in the sight of* Israel. These were extraordinary, upon a vast scale, astounding, indisputable, and such as ought to have rendered it impossible for an Israelite to be disloyal to Jehovah, Israel's God.

13. "*He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through.*" A double wonder, for when the waters were divided the bottom of the sea would naturally be in a very unfit state for the passage of so vast a host as that of Israel; it would in fact have been impassable, had not the Lord made the road for his people. Who else has ever led a nation through a sea? Yet the Lord has done this full often for his saints in providential deliverances, making a highway for them where nothing short of an almighty arm could have done so. "*And he made the waters to stand as an heap.*" He forbade a drop to fall upon his chosen, they felt no spray from the crystal walls on either hand. Fire will descend and water stand upright at the bidding of the Lord of all. The nature of creatures is not their own intrinsically, but is retained or altered at the will of him who first created them. The Lord can cause those evils which threaten to overwhelm us to suspend their ordinary action, and become innocuous to us.

14. "*In the daytime also he led them with a cloud.*" He did it all. *He* alone. He brought them into the wilderness, and he led them through it; it is not the Lord's manner to begin a work, and then cease from it while it is incomplete. The cloud both led and shadowed the tribes. It was by day a vast sun-screen, rendering the fierce heat of the sun and the glare of the desert sand bearable. "*And all the night with a light of fire.*" So constant was the care of the Great Shepherd that all night and every night the token of his presence was with his people. That cloud which was a shade by day was as a sun by night. Even thus the grace which cools and calms our joys, soothes and solaces our sorrows. What a mercy to have a light of fire with us amid the lonely horrors of the wilderness of affliction. Our God has been all this to us, and shall we prove unfaithful to him? We have felt him to be both shade and light, according as our changing circumstances have required.

> "He hath been our joy in woe,
> Cheer'd our heart when it was low,
> And, with warnings softly sad,
> Calm'd our heart when it was glad."

May this frequently renewed experience knit our hearts to him in firmest bonds.

15. "*He clave the rocks in the wilderness.*" Moses was the instrument, but the Lord did it all. Twice he made the flint a gushing rill. What can he not do? "*And gave them drink as out of the great depths,*"—as though it gushed from earth's innermost reservoirs. The streams were so fresh, so copious, so constant, that they seemed to well up from earth's primeval fountains, and to leap at once from "the deep which coucheth beneath." Here was a divine supply for Israel's urgent need, and such an one as ought to have held them for ever in unwavering fidelity to their wonder-working God.

16. The supply of water was as plenteous in quantity as it was miraculous in origin. Torrents, not driblets came from the rocks. Streams followed the camp; the supply was not for an hour or a day. Thus was a marvellous goodness. If we contemplate the aboundings of divine grace we shall be lost in admiration. Mighty rivers of love have flowed for us in the wilderness. Alas, great God! our return has not been commensurate therewith, but far otherwise

17. "*And they sinned yet more against him.*" Outdoing former sins, going into greater deeps of evil: the more they had the more loudly they clamoured for more, and murmured because they had not every luxury that pampered appetites could desire. It was bad enough to mistrust their God for necessaries, but to revolt against him in a greedy rage for superfluities was far worse. Ever is it the nature of the disease of sin to proceed from bad to worse: men never weary of sinning, but rather increase their speed in the race of iniquity. In the case before us the goodness of God was abused into a reason for greater sin. Had not the Lord been so good they would not have been so bad. If he had wrought fewer miracles before, they would not have been so inexcusable in their unbelief, so wanton in their idolatry. "*By provoking the most High in the wilderness.*" Although they were in a position of obvious dependence upon God for everything, being in a desert where the soil could yield them no support, yet they were graceless enough to provoke their benefactor. At one time they provoked his jealousy by their hankering after false gods, anon they excited his wrath by their challenges of his power, their slanders against his love, their rebellions against his will. He was all bounty of love, and they all superfluity of naughtiness. They were favoured above all nations, and yet none were more ill-favoured. For them the heavens dropped manna, and they returned murmurs; the rocks gave them rivers, and they replied with floods of wickedness. Herein, as in a mirror, we see ourselves. Israel in the wilderness acted out, as in a drama, all the story of man's conduct towards his God.

18. "*And they tempted God in their heart.*" He was not tempted, for he cannot be tempted by any, but they acted in a manner calculated to tempt him, and it is always just to charge that upon men which is the obvious tendency of their conduct. Christ cannot die again, and yet many crucify him afresh, because such would be the legitimate result of their behaviour if its effects were not prevented by other forces. The sinners in the wilderness would have had the Lord change his wise proceedings to humour their whims, hence they are said to tempt him. "*By asking meat for their lust.*" Would they have God become purveyor for their greediness? Was there nothing for it but that he must give them whatever their diseased appetites might crave? The sin began in their hearts, but it soon reached their tongues. What they at first silently wished for, they soon loudly demanded with menaces, insinuations, and upbraidings.

19. From this verse we learn that unbelief of God is a slander against him "*Yea, they spake against God.*" But how? The answer is, "*They said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?*" To question the ability of one who is manifestly Almighty, is to speak against him. These people were base enough to say that although their God had given them bread and water, yet he could not properly order or furnish a table. He could give them coarse food, but could not prepare a feast properly arranged, so they were ungrateful enough to declare. As if the manna was a mere make-shift, and the flowing rock-stream a temporary expedient, they ask to have a regularly furnished table, such as they had been accustomed to in Egypt. Alas, how have we also quarrelled with our mercies, and querulously pined for some imaginary good, counting our actual enjoyments to be nothing because they did not happen to be exactly conformed to our foolish fancies. They who will not be content will speak against providence even when it daily loadeth them with benefits.

20. "*Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed.*" They admit what he had done, and yet, with superabundant folly and insolence, demand further proofs of his omnipotence. "*Can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?*" As if the manna were nothing, as if animal food alone was true nourishment for men. If they had argued, "can he *not* give flesh?" the argument would have been reasonable, but they ran into insanity; when, having seen many marvels of omnipotence, they dared to insinuate that other things were beyond the divine power. Yet, in this also,

we have [illegible] their [illegible] conduct. [illegible] new difficulty has excited fresh incredulity. We are still [illegible] [illegible] of heart to believe our first and this is a fault to be [illegible] and [illegible] deepest penitence. For this cause the Lord is often wroth with us, and chastens us sorely; for unbelief has in it a degree of provocation of the highest kind.

21. "*Therefore the Lord heard this, and was wroth.*" He was not indifferent to what they said. He dwelt among them in the holy place, and, therefore, they insulted him to his face. He did not hear a report of it, but the language itself came into his ears. "*So a fire was kindled against Jacob.*" The fire of his anger which was also attended with literal burnings. "*And anger also came up against Israel.*" Whether he viewed them in the lower or higher light, as Jacob or as Israel, he was angry with them: even as mere men they ought to have believed him; and, as chosen tribes, their wicked unbelief was without excuse. The Lord doeth well to be angry at so ungrateful, gratuitous and dastardly an insult as the questioning of his power.

22. "*Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation.*" This is the master sin, the crying sin. Like Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, it sins and makes Israel to sin; it is in itself evil and the parent of evils. It was this sin which shut Israel out of Canaan, and it shuts myriads out of heaven. God is ready to save, combining power with willingness, but rebellious man will not trust his Saviour, and therefore is condemned already. In the text it appears as if all Israel's other sins were as nothing compared with this; this is the peculiar spot which the Lord points at, the special provocation which angered him. From this let every unbeliever learn to tremble more at his unbelief than at anything else. If he be no fornicator, or thief, or liar, let him reflect that it is quite enough to condemn him that he trusts not in God's salvation.

23. "*Though he had commanded the clouds from above.*" Such a marvel ought to have rendered unbelief impossible; when clouds became granaries, seeing should be believing, and doubts should dissolve. "*And opened the doors of heaven.*" The great storehouse doors were set wide open, and the corn of heaven poured out in heaps. Those who would not believe in such a case were hardened indeed; and yet our own position is very similar, for the Lord has wrought for us great deliverances, quite as memorable and undeniable, and yet suspicions and forebodings haunt us. He might have shut the gates of hell upon us, instead of which he has opened the doors of heaven; shall we not both believe in him and magnify him for this?

24. "*And had rained down manna upon them to eat.*" There was so much of it, the skies poured with food, the clouds burst with provender. It was fit food, proper not for looking at but for eating; they could eat it as they gathered it. Mysterious though it was, so that they called it manna, or "what is it?" yet it was eminently adapted for human nourishment; and as it was both abundant and adapted, so also was it available! They had not far to fetch it, it was nigh them, and they had only to gather it up. O Lord Jesus, thou blessed manna of heaven, how all this agrees with Thee! We will even now feed on Thee as our spiritual meat, and will pray Thee to chase away all wicked unbelief from us. Our fathers ate manna and doubted; we feed upon Thee and are filled with assurance. "*And had given them of the corn of heaven.*" It was all a gift without money and without price. That which dropped from above, and was of the best quality, so as to be called heavenly corn, was freely granted them. The manna was round, like coriander seed, and hence was rightly called corn; it did not rise from the earth, but descended from the clouds, and hence the words of the verse are literally accurate. The point to be noted is that this wonder of wonders left the beholders, and the feasters, as prone as ever to mistrust their Lord.

25. "*Man did eat angels' food.*" The delicacies of kings were outdone, for the dainties of angels were supplied. Bread of the mighty ones fell on feeble man. Those who are lower than the angels fared as well. It was not for the priests, or the princes, that the manna fell; but for all the nation, for every man,

woman, and child in the camp: and there was sufficient for them all, for "*he sent them meat to the full.*" God's banquets are never stinted; he gives the best diet, and plenty of it. Gospel provisions deserve every praise that we can heap upon them; they are free, full, and pre-eminent; they are of God's preparing, sending, and bestowing. He is well fed whom God feeds; heaven's meat is nourishing and plentiful. If we have ever fed upon Jesus we have tasted better than angels' food; for

> "Never did angels taste above
> Redeeming grace and dying love."

It will be our wisdom to eat to the full of it, for God has so sent it that we are not straitened in him, but in our own bowels. Happy pilgrims who in the desert have their meat sent from the Lord's own palace above; let them eat abundantly of the celestial banquet, and magnify the all-sufficient grace which supplies all their needs, according to His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.

26. "*He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven.*" He is Lord Paramount, above the prince of the power of the air: storms arise and tempests blow at his command. Winds sleep till God arouses them, and then, like Samuel, each one answers, "Here am I, for thou didst call me." "*And by his power he brought in the south wind.*" Either these winds followed each other, and so blew the birds in the desired direction, or else they combined to form a south-east wind; in either case they fulfilled the design of the Lord, and illustrated his supreme and universal power. If one wind will not serve, another shall; and if need be, they shall both blow at once. We speak of *fickle* winds, but their obedience to their Lord is such that they deserve a better word. If we ourselves were half as obedient as the winds, we should be far superior to what we now are.

27. "*He rained flesh also upon them as dust.*" First, he rained bread and then flesh, when he might have rained fire and brimstone. The words indicate the speed, and the abundance of the descending quails. "*And feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea;*" there was no counting them. By a remarkable providence, if not by miracle, enormous numbers of migratory birds were caused to alight around the tents of the tribes. It was, however, a doubtful blessing, as easily acquired and superabounding riches generally are. The Lord save us from meat which is seasoned with divine wrath.

28. "*And he let it fall in the midst of their camp.*" They had no journey to make; they had clamoured for flesh, and it almost flew into their mouths, "*round about their habitations.*" This made them glad for the moment, but they knew not that mercies can be sent in anger, else had they trembled at sight of the good things which they had lusted after.

29. "*So they did eat, and were well filled.*" They greedily devoured the birds, even to repletion. The Lord shewed them that he could "provide flesh for his people," even enough and to spare. He also shewed them that when lust wins its desire it is disappointed, and by the way of satiety arrives at distaste. First the food satiates, then it nauseates. "*For he gave them their own desire.*" They were filled with their own ways. The flesh-meat was unhealthy for them, but as they cried for it they had it, and a curse with it. O my God, deny me my most urgent prayers sooner than answer them in displeasure. Better hunger and thirst after righteousness than to be well filled with sin's dainties.

30, 31. "*They were not estranged from their lust.*" Lust grows upon that which it feeds on. If sick of too much flesh, yet men grow not weary of lust, they change the object, and go on lusting still. When one sin is proved to be a bitterness, men do not desist, but pursue another iniquity. If, like Jehu, they turn from Baal, they fall to worshipping the calves of Bethel.

"*But while their meat was yet in their mouths,*" before they could digest their coveted meat, it turned to their destruction. "*The wrath of God came upon them*" before they could swallow their first meal of flesh. Short was the pleasure, sudden was the doom. The festival ended in a funeral. "*And slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel.*" Perhaps these

were the ringleaders in the lusting; they are first in the punishment. God's justice has no respect of persons, the strong and the valiant fall as well as the weak and the mean. What they ate on earth they digested in hell, as many have done since. How soon they died, though they felt not the edge of the sword! How terrible was the havoc, though not amid the din of battle! My soul, see here the danger of gratified passions; they are the janitors of hell. When the Lord's people hunger God loves them, Lazarus is his beloved, though he pines upon crumbs; but when he fatteneth the wicked he abhors them; Dives is hated of heaven when he fares sumptuously every day. We must never dare to judge men's happiness by their tables, the heart is the place to look at. The poorest starveling believer is more to be envied than the most full-fleshed of the favourites of the world. Better be God's dog than the devil's darling.

32. "*For all this they sinned still.*" Judgments moved them no more than mercies. They defied the wrath of God. Though death was in the cup of their iniquity, yet they would not put it away, but continued to quaff it as if it were a healthful potion. How truly might these words be applied to ungodly men who have been often afflicted, laid upon a sick bed, broken in spirit, and impoverished in estate, and yet have persevered in their evil ways, unmoved by terrors, unswayed by threatenings. "*And believed not for his wondrous works.*" Their unbelief was chronic and incurable. Miracles both of mercy and judgment were unavailing. They might be made to wonder, but they could not be taught to believe. Continuance in sin and in unbelief go together. Had they believed they would not have sinned, had they not have been blinded by sin they would have believed. There is a reflex action between faith and character. How can the lover of sin believe? How, on the other hand, can the unbeliever cease from sin? God's ways with us in providence are in themselves both convincing and converting, but unrenewed nature refuses to be either convinced or converted by them.

33. "*Therefore their days did he consume in vanity.*" Apart from faith life is vanity. To wander up and down in the wilderness was a vain thing indeed, when unbelief had shut them out of the promised land. It was meet that those who would not live to answer the divine purpose by believing and obeying their God should be made to live to no purpose, and to die before their time, unsatisfied, unblest. Those who wasted their days in sin had little cause to wonder when the Lord cut short their lives, and sware that they should never enter the rest which they had despised. "*And their years in trouble.*" Weary marches were their trouble, and to come to no resting place was their vanity. Innumerable graves were left all along the track of Israel, and if any ask, "Who slew all these?" the answer must be, "They could not enter in because of unbelief." Doubtless much of the vexation and failure of many lives results from their being sapped by unbelief, and honeycombed by evil passions. None live so fruitlessly and so wretchedly as those who allow sense and sight to override faith, and their reason and appetite to domineer over their fear of God. Our days go fast enough according to the ordinary lapse of time, but the Lord can make them rust away at a bitterer rate, till we feel as if sorrow actually ate out the heart of our life, and like a canker devoured our existence. Such was the punishment of rebellious Israel, the Lord grant it may not be ours.

34. "*When he slew them, then they sought him.*" Like whipped curs, they licked their Master's feet. They obeyed only so long as they felt the whip about their loins. Hard are the hearts which only death can soften. While thousands died around them, the people of Israel became suicidal rebels, and repaired to the tabernacle door, like sheep who run in a storm and the black dog drives them, but scatter and wander when the shepherd whistles him off. "*And they returned and enquired early after God.*" They could not be too zealous, they were in hot haste to prove their loyalty to their new King. "The devil was sick and the devil a monk would be." Who would not

be pious when the plague is abroad? Doors, which were never so sanctified before, put on the white cross then. Even reprobates send for the minister when they lie a dying. Thus sinners pay involuntary homage to the power of right and the supremacy of God, but their hypocritical homage is of small value in the sight of the Great Judge.

35. "*And they remembered that God was their rock.*" Sharp strokes awoke their sleepy memories. Reflection followed infliction. They were led to see that all their dependance must be placed upon their God; for he alone had been their shelter, their foundation, their fountain of supply, and their unchangeable friend. What could have made them forget this? Was it that their stomachs were so full of flesh that they had no space for ruminating upon spiritual things? "*And the high God their redeemer.*" They had forgotten this also. The high hand and outstretched arm which redeemed them out of bondage had both faded from their mental vision. Alas, poor man, how readily dost thou forget thy God! Shame on thee, ungrateful worm, to have no sense of favours a few days after they have been received. Will nothing make thee keep in memory the mercy of thy God except the utter withdrawal of it?

36. "*Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth.*" Bad were they at their best. False on their knees, liars in their prayers. Mouth-worship must be very detestable to God when dissociated from the heart: other kings love flattery, but the King of kings abhors it. Since the sharpest afflictions only extort from carnal men a feigned submission to God, there is proof positive that the heart is desperately set on mischief, and that sin is ingrained in our very nature. If you beat a tiger with many stripes you cannot turn him into a sheep. The devil cannot be whipped out of human nature, though another devil, namely, hypocrisy may be whipped into it. Piety produced by the damps of sorrow and the heats of terror is of mushroom growth; it is rapid in its upspringing—"they enquired early after God"—but it is a mere unsubstantial fungus of unabiding excitement. "*And they lied unto him with their tongues.*" Their godly speech was cant, their praise mere wind, their prayer a fraud. Their skin-deep repentance was a film too thin to conceal the deadly wound of sin. This teaches us to place small reliance upon professions of repentance made by dying men, or upon such even in others when the basis is evidently slavish fear, and nothing more. Any thief will whine out repentance if he thinks the judge will thereby be moved to let him go scot free.

37. "*For their heart was not right with him.*" There was no depth in their repentance, it was not heart work. They were fickle as a weathercock, every wind turned them, their mind was not settled upon God. "*Neither were they stedfast in his covenant.*" Their promises were no sooner made than broken, as if only made in mockery. Good resolutions called at their hearts as men do at inns; they tarried awhile, and then took their leave. They were hot to-day for holiness, but cold towards it to-morrow. Variable as the hues of the dolphin, they changed from reverence to rebellion, from thankfulness to murmuring. One day they gave their gold to build a tabernacle for Jehovah, and the next they plucked off their ear-rings to make a golden [illegible]. Surely the heart is a chameleon. Proteus had not so many changes. As in the ague we both burn and freeze, so do inconstant natures in their religion.

38. "*But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not.*" Though they were full of flattery, he was full of mercy, and for this cause he had pity on them. Not because of their pitiful and hypocritical pretensions to penitence, but because of his own real compassion for them he overlooked their provocations. "*Yea, many a time turned he his anger away.*" When he had grown angry with them he withdrew his displeasure. Even unto seventy times seven did he forgive their offences. He was slow, very slow, to anger. The sword was uplifted and flashed in mid-air, but it was sheathed again, and the nation yet lived. Though not mentioned in the text, we know from the history that a mediator interposed, the man Moses stood in the gap; even so at this hour the Lord Jesus pleads for sinners, and averts the divine

wrath. Many a barren tree is left standing because the dresser of the vineyard cries, "let it alone this year also." "*And did not stir up all his wrath.*" Had he done so they would have perished in a moment. When his wrath is kindled but a little men are burned up as chaff; but were he to let loose his indignation, the solid earth itself would melt, and hell would engulf every rebel. Who knoweth the power of thine anger, O Lord? We see the riches of God's compassion, but we never see all his wrath.

39. "*For he remembered that they were but flesh.*" They were forgetful of God, but he was mindful of them. He knew that they were made of earthy, frail, corruptible material, and therefore he dealt leniently with them. Though in this he saw no excuse for their sin, yet he even trained it into a reason for mercy; the Lord is ever ready to discover some plea or other upon which he may have compassion. "*A wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.*" Man is but a breath, gone never to return. Spirit and wind are in this alike, so far as our humanity is concerned; they pass and cannot be recalled. What a nothing is our life. How gracious on the Lord's part to make man's insignificance an argument for staying his wrath.

40. "*How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness.*" Times enough did they rebel: they were as constant in provoking as he was in his patience. In our own case, who can count his errors? In what book could all our perverse rebellions be recorded? The wilderness was a place of manifest dependance, where the tribes were helpless without divine supplies, yet they wounded the hand which fed them while it was in the act of feeding them. Is there no likeness between us and them? Does it bring no tears into our eyes, while, as in a glass, we see our own selves. "*And grieve him in the desert.*" Their provocations had an effect; God was not impassible to them, he is said to have been grieved. His holiness could not but grieve in their sin, his justice in their unjust treatment, or his truth in their unbelief. What must it be to grieve the Lord of love! Yet we also have vexed the Holy Spirit, and he would long ago have withdrawn himself from us, were it not that he is God and not man. We are in the desert where we meet our God, let us not make it a wilderness of sin by grieving him.

41. "*Yea, they turned back.*" Their hearts sighed for Egypt and its flesh-pots. They turned to their old ways again and again, after they had been scourged out of them. Full of twists and turns, they never kept the straight path. "*And tempted God.*" As far as in them lay they tempted him. His ways were good, and they in the main to have them altered tempted God. Before they would believe in him they demanded signs, defying the Lord to do this and that, and acting as if he could be enticed into being the minion of their lusts. What blasphemy was this! Let us not tempt Christ lest we also be destroyed by the destroyer. "*And limited the Holy One of Israel.*" Doubted his power and so limited him, refused to his wisdom and so did the same. To chalk out a path for God is arrogant impiety. The Holy One must do right, the covenant God of Israel must be true, it is profanity itself to say unto him thou shalt do this or that, or otherwise I will not worship thee. Not thus is the Eternal God to be led by a string by his impotent creature. He is the Lord and he will do as seemeth him good.

42 They remembered not his hand, *nor* the day when he delivered them from the enemy.

43 How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan:

44 And had turned their rivers into blood; and their floods, that they could not drink.

45 He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them.

46 He gave also their increase unto the caterpiller, and their labour unto the locust.

47 He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycomore trees with frost.

48 He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts.

49 He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels *among them.*

50 He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence;

51 And smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of *their* strength in the tabernacles of Ham:

52 But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.

53 And he led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.

42. "*They remembered not his hand.*" Yet it must have been difficult to forget it. Such displays of divine power as those which smote Egypt with astonishment, it must have needed some more than usual effort to blot from the tablets of memory. It is probably meant that they practically, rather than actually, forgot. He who forgets the natural returns of gratitude, may justly be charged with not remembering the obligation. "*Nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy.*" The day itself was erased from their calendar, so far as any due result from it or return for it. Strange is the faculty of memory in its oblivions as well as its records. Sin perverts man's powers, makes them forceful only in wrong directions, and practically dead for righteous ends.

43. "*How he had wrought his signs in Egypt.*" The plagues were ensigns of Jehovah's presence and proofs of his hatred of idols; these instructive acts of power were wrought in the open view of all, as signals are set up to be observed by those far and near. "*And his wonders in the field of Zoan.*" In the whole land were miracles wrought, not in cities alone, but in the broad territory, in the most select and ancient regions of the proud nation. This the Israelites ought not to have forgotten, for they were the favoured people for whom these memorable deeds were wrought.

44. "*And had turned their rivers into blood.*" The waters had been made the means of the destruction of Israel's newborn infants, and now they do as it were betray the crime—they blush for it, they avenge it on the murderers. The Nile was the vitality of Egypt, its true life-blood, but at God's command it became a flowing curse; every drop of it was a horror, poison to drink, and terror to gaze on. How soon might the Almighty One do this with the Thames or the Seine. Sometimes he has allowed men, who were his rod, to make rivers crimson with gore, and this is a severe judgment; but the event now before us was more mysterious, more general, more complete, and must, therefore, have been a plague of the first magnitude. "*And their floods, that they could not drink.*" Lesser streams partook in the curse, reservoirs and canals felt the evil; God does nothing by halves. All Egypt boasted of the sweet waters of their river, but they were made to loathe it more than they had ever loved it. Our mercies may soon become our miseries if the Lord shall deal with us in wrath.

45. "*He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them.*" Small creatures become great tormentors. When they swarm they can sting a man till they threaten to eat him up. In this case, various orders of insects fought under the same banner; lice and beetles, gnats and hornets, wasps and gadflies dashed forward in fierce battalions, and worried the sinners of Egypt without

mercy. The tiniest plagues are the greatest. What sword or spear could fight with these innumerable bands? Vain were the monarch's armour and robes of majesty, the little cannibals were no more lenient towards royal flesh than any other; it had the same blood in it, and the same sin upon it. How great is that God who thus by the minute can crush the magnificent. "*And frogs, which destroyed them.*" These creatures swarmed everywhere when they were alive, until the people felt ready to die at the sight; and when the reptiles died, the heaps of their bodies made the land to stink so foully, that a pestilence was imminent. Thus not only did earth and air send forth armies of horrible life, but the water also added its legions of loathsomeness. It seemed as if the Nile was first made nauseous and then caused to leave its bed altogether, crawling and leaping in the form of frogs. Those who contend with the Almighty, little know what arrows are in his quiver; surprising sin shall be visited with surprising punishment.

46. "*He gave also their increase unto the caterpiller, and their labour unto the locust.*" Different sorts of devourers ate up every green herb and tree. What one would not eat another did. What they expected from the natural fertility of the soil, and what they looked for from their own toil, they saw devoured before their eyes by an insatiable multitude against whose depredations no defence could be found. Observe in the text that the Lord did it all—"he sent," "he gave," "he destroyed," "he gave up," &c.; whatever the second agent may be, the direct hand of the Lord is in every national visitation.

47. "*He destroyed their vines with hail.*" No more shall thy butler press the clusters into thy cup, O Pharaoh! The young fruitbearing shoots were broken off, the vintage failed. "*And their sycomore trees with frost.*" Frost was not usual, but Jehovah regards no laws of nature when men regard not his moral laws. The sycomore fig was perhaps more the fruit of the many than was the vine, therefore this judgment was meant to smite the poor, while the former fell most heavily upon the rich. Mark how the heavens obey their Lord and yield their stores of hail, and note how the fickle weather is equally subservient to the divine will.

48. "*He gave up their cattle also to the hail.*" What hail it must have been to have force enough to batter down bullocks and other great beasts. God usually protects animals from such destruction, but here he withdrew his safeguards and gave them up: may the Lord never give *us* up. Some read, "shut up," and the idea of being abandoned to destructive influences is then before us in another shape. "*And their flocks to hot thunderbolts.*" Fire was mingled with the hail, the fire ran along upon the ground, it smote the smaller cattle. What a storm must that have been: its effects were terrible enough upon plants, but to see the poor dumb creatures stricken must have been heart breaking. Adamantine was that heart which quailed not under such plagues as these, harder than adamant those hearts which in after years forgot all that the Lord had done, and broke off from their allegiance to him.

49. "*He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble.*" His last arrow was the sharpest. He reserved the strong wine of his indignation to the last. Note how the psalmist piles up the words, and well he might; for blow followed blow, each one more staggering than its predecessor, and then the crushing stroke was reserved for the end. "*By sending evil angels among them.*" Messengers of evil entered their houses at midnight, and smote the dearest objects of their love. The angels were evil to these, though good enough in themselves; those who to the heirs of salvation are ministers of grace, are to the heirs of wrath executioners of judgment. When God sends angels, they are sure to come, and if he bids them slay they will not spare. See how sin sets all the powers of heaven in array against man; he has no friend left in the universe when God is his enemy.

50. "*He made a way to his anger,*" coming to the point with them by slow degrees; assailing their outworks first by destroying their property, and then coming in upon their persons as through an open breach in the walls. He broke

down all the comforts of their life, and then advanced against their life itself. Nothing could stand in his way; he cleared a space in which to do execution upon his adversaries. "*He spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence.*" In their soul was the origin of the sin, and he followed it to its source and smote it there. A fierce disease filled the land with countless funerals; Jehovah dealt out myriads of blows, and multitudes of spirits failed before him.

51. "*And smote all the firstborn in Egypt.*" No exceptions were made, the monarch bewailed his heir as did the menial at the mill. They smote the Lord's firstborn, even Israel, and he smites theirs. "*The chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham.*" Swinging his scythe over the field, death topped off the highest flowers. The tents of Ham knew each one its own peculiar sorrow, and were made to sympathise with the sorrows which had been ruthlessly inflicted upon the habitations of Israel. Thus curses come home to roost. Oppressors are repaid in their own coin, without the discount of a penny.

52. "*But made his own people to go forth like sheep.*" The contrast is striking, and ought never to have been forgotten by the people. The wolves were slain in heaps, the sheep were carefully gathered, and triumphantly delivered. The tables were turned, and the poor serfs became the honoured people, while their oppressors were humbled before them. Israel went out in a compact body like a flock; they were defenceless in themselves as sheep, but they were safe under their Great Shepherd; they left Egypt as easily as a flock leaves one pasture for another. "*And guided them in the wilderness like a flock.*" Knowing nothing of the way by their own understanding or experience, they were, nevertheless, rightly directed, for the All-wise God knew every spot of the wilderness. To the sea, through the sea, and from the sea, the Lord led his chosen; while their former taskmasters were too cowed in spirit, and broken in power, to dare to molest them.

53. "*And he led them on safely, so that they feared not.*" After the first little alarm, natural enough when they found themselves pursued by their old task-masters, they plucked up courage and ventured boldly into the sea, and afterwards into the desert where no man dwelt. "*But the sea overwhelmed their enemies.*" They were gone, gone for ever, never to disturb the fugitives again. That tremendous blow effectually defended the tribes for forty years from any further attempt to drive them back. Egypt found the stone too heavy and was glad to let it alone. Let the Lord be praised who thus effectually freed his elect nation.

What a grand narrative have we been considering. Well might the mightiest master of sacred song select "Israel in Egypt" as a choice theme for his genius; and well may every believing mind linger over every item of the amazing transaction. The marvel is that the favoured nation should live as if unmindful of it all, and yet such is human nature. Alas, poor man! Rather, alas, base heart!

We now, after a pause, follow again the chain of events, the narration of which had been interrupted by a retrospect, and we find Israel entering into the promised land, there to repeat her follies and enlarge her crimes.

54 And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, *even to* this mountain, *which* his right hand had purchased.

55 He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

56 Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies:

57 But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow.

58 For they provoked him to anger with their high places,
and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.
59 When God heard *this*, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred
Israel:
60 So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent *which*
he placed among men;
61 And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory
into the enemy's hand.
62 He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was
wroth with his inheritance.
63 The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens
were not given to marriage.
64 Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no
lamentation.
65 Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, *and* like a
mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.
66 And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them
to a perpetual reproach.

54. "*And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary.*" He conducted them to the frontier of the Holy Land, where he intended the tabernacle to become the permanent symbol of his abode among his people. He did not leave them halfway upon their journey to their heritage: his power and wisdom preserved the nation till the palm trees of Jericho were within sight on the other side of the river. "*Even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased.*" Nor did he leave them then, but still conducted them till they were in the region round about Zion, which was to be the central seat of his worship. This the Lord had purchased in type of old by the sacrifice of Isaac, fit symbol of the greater sacrifice which was in due season to be presented there: that mountain was also redeemed by power, when the Lord's right hand enabled his valiant men to smite the Jebusites, and take the sacred hill from the insulting Canaanite. Thus shall the elect of God enjoy the sure protection of the Lord of hosts, even to the border land of death, and through the river, up to the hill of the Lord in glory. The purchased people shall safely reach the purchased inheritance.

55. "*He cast out the heathen also before them,*" or "he drove out the nations." Not only were armies routed, but whole peoples displaced. The iniquity of the Canaanites was full; their vices made them rot above ground; therefore, the land ate up its inhabitants, the hornets vexed them, the pestilence destroyed them, and the sword of the tribes completed the execution to which the justice of long provoked heaven had at length appointed them. The Lord was the true conqueror of Canaan; he cast out the nations as men cast out filth from their habitations, he uprooted them as noxious weeds are extirpated by the husbandman. "*And divided them an inheritance by line.*" He divided the land of the nations among the tribes by lot and measure, assigning Hivite, Perizzite, and Jebusite territory to Simeon, Judah, or Ephraim, as the case might be. Among those condemned nations were not only giants in stature, but also giants in crime; those monsters of iniquity had too long defiled the earth; it was time that they should no more indulge the unnatural crimes for which they were infamous; they were, therefore, doomed to forfeit life and lands by the hands of the tribes of Israel. The distribution of the forfeited country was made by divine appointment; it was no scramble, but a judicial appointment of lands which had fallen to the crown by the attainder of the former holders. "*And made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.*" The favoured people entered upon a furnished house: they found the larder supplied, for they fed upon the old corn of the land, and

the dwellings were already builded in which they could dwell. Thus does another race often enter into the lot of a former people, and it is sad indeed when the change which judgment decrees does not turn out to be much for the better, because the incomers inherit the evils as well as the goods of the ejected. Such a case of judicial visitation ought to have had a salutary influence upon the tribes; but, alas, they were incorrigible, and would not learn even from examples so near at home and so terribly suggestive.

56. "*Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God.*" Change of condition had not altered their manners. They left their nomadic habits, but not their tendencies to wander from their God. Though every divine promise had been fulfilled to the letter, and the land flowing with milk and honey was actually their own, yet they tried the Lord again with unbelief, and provoked him with other sins. He is not only high and glorious, but most High, yea *the* most High, the only being who deserves to be so highly had in honour; yet, instead of honouring him, Israel grieved him with rebellion. "*And kept not his testimonies.*" They were true to nothing but hereditary treachery; steadfast in nothing but in falsehood. They knew his truth and forgot it, his will and disobeyed it, his grace and perverted it to an occasion for greater transgression. Reader, dost thou need a looking-glass? See here is one which suits the present expositor well; does it not also reflect thine image?

57. "*But turned back.*" Turned over the old leaf, repeated the same offences, started aside like an ill-made bow, were false and faithless to their best promises. "*And dealt unfaithfully like their fathers,*" proving themselves legitimate by manifesting the treachery of their sires. They were a new generation, but not a new nation—another race yet not another. Evil propensities are transmitted; the birth follows the progenitor; the wild ass breeds wild asses; the children of the raven fly to the carrion. Human nature does not improve, the new editions contain all the errata of the first, and sometimes fresh errors are imported. "*They were turned aside like a deceitful bow,*" which not only fails to send the arrow towards the mark in a direct line, but springs back to the archer's hurt, and perhaps sends the shaft among his friends to their serious jeopardy. Israel boasted of the bow as the national weapon, they sang the song of the bow, and hence a deceitful bow is made to be the type and symbol of their own unsteadfastness; God can make men's glory the very ensign of their shame, he draws a bar sinister across the escutcheon of traitors.

58. "*For they provoked him to anger with their high places.*" This was their first error—will worship, or the worship of God, otherwise than according to his command. Many think lightly of this, but indeed it is no mean sin; and its tendencies to further offence are very powerful. The Lord would have his holy place remain as the only spot for sacrifice; and Israel, in wilful rebellion, (no doubt glossed over by the plea of great devotion,) determined to have many altars upon many hills. If they might have but one God, they insisted upon it that they would not be restricted to one sacred place of sacrifice. How much of the worship of the present day is neither more nor less than sheer will-worship! Nobody dare plead a divine appointment for a tithe of the offices, festivals, ceremonies, and observances of certain churches. Doubtless God, so far from being honoured by worship which he has not commanded, is greatly angered at it. "*And moved him to jealousy with their graven images.*" This was but one more step; they manufactured symbols of the invisible God, for they lusted after something tangible and visible to which they could shew reverence. This also is the crying sin of modern times. Do we not hear and see superstition abounding. Images, pictures, crucifixes, and a host of visible things are had in religious honour, and worst of all men now-a-days worship what they eat, and call that a God which passes into their belly, and thence into baser places still. Surely the Lord is very patient, or he would visit the earth for this worst and basest of idolatry. He is a jealous God, and abhors to see himself dishonoured by any form of representation which can come from man's hands.

59. "*When God heard this, he was wroth.*" The mere report of it filled him with indignation; he could not bear it, he was incensed to the uttermost, and most justly so. "*And greatly abhorred Israel.*" He cast his idolatrous people from his favour, and left them to themselves, and their own devices. How could he have fellowship with idols? What concord hath Christ with Belial? Sin is in itself so offensive that it makes the sinner offensive too. Idols of any sort are highly abhorrent to God, and we must see to it that we keep ourselves from them through divine grace, for rest assured idolatry is not consistent with true grace in the heart. If Dagon sit aloft in any soul, the ark of God is not there. Where the Lord dwells no image of jealousy will be tolerated. A visible church will soon become a visible curse if idols be set up in it, and then the pruning knife will remove it as a dead branch from the vine.

Note that God did not utterly cast away his people Israel even when he greatly abhorred them, for he returned in mercy to them, so the subsequent verses tell us: so now the seed of Abraham, though for awhile under a heavy cloud, will be gathered yet again, for the covenant of salt shall not be broken. As for the spiritual seed, the Lord hath not despised nor abhorred them; they are his peculiar treasure and lie for ever near his heart.

60. "*So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men.*" His glory would no more reveal itself there, he left Shiloh to become a complete ruin. At the door of that tent shameless sin had been perpetrated, and all around it idols had been adored, and therefore the glory departed, and Ichabod was sounded as a word of dread concerning Shiloh and the tribe of Ephraim. Thus may the candlestick be removed though the candle is not quenched. Erring churches become apostate, but a true church still remains; if Shiloh be profaned Zion is consecrated. Yet is it ever a solemn caution to all the assemblies of the saints, admonishing them to walk humbly with their God, when we read such words as those of the prophet Jeremiah in his seventh chapter, "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these. Go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel." Let us take heed, lest as the ark never returned to Shiloh after its capture by the Philistines, so the gospel may be taken from us in judgment, never to be restored to the same church again.

61. "*And delivered his strength into captivity.*" The ark was captured by the Philistines in battle, only because the Lord for the punishment of Israel chose to deliver it into their hands, otherwise they could have had no power at all against it. The token of the divine presence is here poetically called "his strength;" and, indeed, the presence of the Lord is his strength among his people. It was a black day when the mercy-seat was removed, when the cherubim took flight, and Israel's palladium was carried away. "*And his glory into the enemy's hand.*" The ark was the place for the revealed glory of God, and his enemies exulted greatly when they bore it away into their own cities. Nothing could more clearly have shewn the divine displeasure. It seemed to say that Jehovah would sooner dwell among his avowed adversaries than among so false a people as Israel; he would sooner bear the insults of Philistia than the treacheries of Ephraim. This was a fearful downfall for the favoured nation, and it was followed by dire judgments of most appalling nature. When God is gone all is gone. No calamity can equal the withdrawal of the divine presence from a people. O Israel, how art thou brought low! Who shall help thee now that thy God has left thee!

62. "*He gave his people over also unto the sword.*" They fell in battle because they were no longer aided by the divine strength. Sharp was the sword, but sharper still the cause of its being unsheathed. "*And was wroth with his inheritance.*" They were *his* still, and twice in this verse they are called so; yet his regard for them did not prevent his chastising them, even with a rod of steel. Where the love is most fervent, the jealousy is most cruel. Sin cannot be tolerated in those who are a people near unto God.

63. "*The fire consumed their young men.*" As fire slew Nadab and Abihu literally, so the fire of divine wrath fell on the sons of Eli, who defiled the sanctuary of the Lord, and the like fire, in the form of war, consumed the flower of the people. "*And their maidens were not given to marriage.*" No nuptial hymns were sung, the bride lacked her bridegroom, the edge of the sword had cut the bands of their espousals, and left unmarried those who else had been extolled in hymns of congratulation. Thus Israel was brought very low, she could not find husbands for her maids, and therefore her state was not replenished; no young children clustered around parental knees. The nation had failed in its solemn task of instructing the young in the fear of Jehovah, and it was a fitting judgment that the very production of a posterity should be endangered.

64. "*Their priests fell by the sword.*" Hophni and Phineas were slain; they were among the chief in sin, and, therefore, they perished with the rest. Priesthood is no shelter for transgressors; the jewelled breastplate cannot turn aside the arrows of judgment. "*And their widows made no lamentation.*" Their private griefs were swallowed up in the greater national agony, because the ark of God was taken. As the maidens had no heart for the marriage song, so the widows had no spirit, even to utter the funeral wail. The dead were buried too often and too hurriedly to allow of the usual rites of lamentation. This was the lowest depth; from this point things will take a gracious turn.

65. *The Lord awaked as one out of sleep.*" Justly inactive he had suffered the enemy to triumph, his ark to be captured, and his people to be slain; but now he arouses himself, his heart is full of pity for his chosen, and anger against the insulting foe. Woe to thee, O Philistia, now shalt thou feel the weight of his right hand! Waking and putting forth strength like a man who had taken a refreshing draught the Lord is said to be, "*like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.*" Strong and full of energy the Lord dashed upon his foes, and made them stagger beneath his blows. His ark from city to city went as an avenger rather than as a trophy, and in every place the false gods fell helplessly before it.

66. "*He smote his enemies in the hinder parts.*" The emerods rendered them ridiculous, and their numerous defeats made them yet more so. They fled but were overtaken and wounded in the back to their eternal disgrace. "*He put them to a perpetual reproach.*" Orientals are not very refined and we can well believe that the hemorrhoids were the subject of many a taunt against the Philistines, as also were their frequent defeats by Israel until at last they were crushed under, never to exist again as a distinct nation.

67 Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim:

68 But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved.

69 And he built his sanctuary like high *palaces,* like the earth which he hath established for ever.

70 He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds:

71 From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.

72 So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.

67. "*Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph.*" God had honoured Ephraim, for to that tribe belonged Joshua the great conqueror, and Gideon the great judge, and within its borders was Shiloh the place of the ark and the sanctuary; but now the Lord would change all this and set up other rulers.

He would no longer leave matters to the leadership of Ephraim, since that tribe had been tried and found wanting. "*And chose not the tribe of Ephraim.*" Sin had been found in them, folly and instability, and therefore they were set aside as unfit to lead.

68. "*But chose the tribe of Judah.*" To give the nation another trial this tribe was elected to supremacy. This was according to Jacob's dying prophecy. Our Lord sprang out of Judah and he it is whom his brethren shall praise. "*The Mount Zion which he loved.*" The tabernacle and ark were removed to Zion during the reign of David; no honour was left to the wayward Ephraimites. Hard by this mountain the Father of the Faithful had offered up his only son, and there in future days the great gatherings of his chosen seed would be, and therefore Zion is said to be lovely unto God.

69. "*And he built his sanctuary like high palaces.*" The tabernacle was placed on high, literally and spiritually it was as a mountain of beauty. True religion was exalted in the land. For sanctity it was a temple, for majesty it was a palace. "*Like the earth which he hath established for ever.*" Stability as well as stateliness were seen in the temple, and so also in the church of God. The prophet saw both in vision.

70. "*He chose David also his servant.*" It was an election of a sovereignly gracious kind, and it operated practically by making the chosen man a willing servant of the Lord. He was not chosen because he was a servant, but in order that he might be so. David always esteemed it to be a high honour that he was both elect of God, and a servant of God. "*And took him from the sheepfolds.*" A shepherd of sheep he had been, and this was a fit school for a shepherd of men. Lowliness of occupation will debar no man from such honours as the Lord's election confers, the Lord seeth not as man seeth. He delights to bless those who are of low estate.

71. "*From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.*" Exercising the care and art of those who watch for the young lambs, David followed the ewes in their wanderings; the tenderness and patience thus acquired would tend to the development of characteristics most becoming in a king. To the man thus prepared, the office and dignity which God had appointed for him, came in due season, and he was enabled worthily to wear them. It is wonderful how often divine wisdom so arranges the early and obscure portion of a choice life, so as to make it a preparatory school for a more active and noble future.

72. "*So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart.*" David was upright before God, and never swerved in heart from the obedient worship of Jehovah. Whatever faults he had, he was unfeignedly sincere in his allegiance to Israel's superior king; he shepherded for God with honest heart. "*And guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.*" He was a sagacious ruler, and the psalmist magnifies the Lord for having appointed him. Under David, the Jewish kingdom first rose to an honourable position among the nations, and exercised an influence over its neighbours. In closing the Psalm which has described the varying conditions of the chosen nation, we are glad to end so peacefully; with all noise of tumult or of sinful rites hushed into silence. After a long voyage over a stormy sea, the ark of the Jewish state rested on its Ararat, beneath a wise and gentle reign, to be wafted no more hither and thither by floods and gales. The psalmist had all along intended to make this his last stanza, and we too may be content to finish all our songs of love with the reign of the Lord's anointed. Only we may eagerly enquire, when will it come? When shall we end these desert roamings, these rebellions, and chastisings, and enter into the rest of a settled kingdom, with the Lord Jesus reigning as "the Prince of the house of David?"

Thus have we ended this lengthy parable, may we in our life-parable have less of sin, and as much of grace as are displayed in Israel's history, and may we close it under the safe guidance of "that great Shepherd of the sheep." AMEN.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—This Psalm appears to have been occasioned by the removal of the sanctuary from Shiloh in the tribe of Judah, and the co-incident transfer of pre-eminence in Israel from the former to the latter tribe, as clearly evinced by David's settlement as the head of the church and nation. Though this was the execution of God's purpose, the writer here shows that it also proceeded from the divine judgment on Ephraim, under whose leadership the people had manifested the same sinful and rebellious character which had distinguished their ancestors in Egypt.—*B. M. Smith, in "The Critical and Explanatory Pocket Bible."* 1867.

Verse 1.—"*Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears.*" Inclining the ears does not denote any ordinary sort of hearing, but such as a disciple renders to the words of his master, with submission and reverence of mind, silent and earnest, that whatever is enunciated for the purpose of instruction may be heard and properly understood, and nothing be allowed to escape. He is a hearer of a different stamp, who hears carelessly, not for the purpose of learning or imitation, but to criticise, to make merry, to indulge animosity, or to kill time.—*Musculus.*

Verse 1.—"*Incline your ears.*" Lay them close to my lips, that no parcel of this sacred language fall to the ground by your default.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 1.—"*To the words of my mouth.*" Was it not sufficient for the parallelism to say, *To my words?* Obviously. Why then is there any notice taken of the *mouth?* Because those who can prescribe laws to their subjects are also those who scorn to address them with their mouth. Such is the custom of kings, princes, pontiffs, both Roman and others. For the higher every one rises in dignity, the less he considers it becoming to him to speak to the people, to teach and instruct them by word of mouth. They think they owe nothing to the people, but are altogether taken up with this, that they may be looked up to as princes, and so retain a certain secular majesty of command. But, with one's own mouth to teach the ignorant, is a singular proof of love and paternal affection, such as becomes the preceptor, pastor and teacher. This Christ most constantly employed, because he was touched with paternal affection towards the lost sheep, and came as a shepherd to seek them. The manner of earthly princes he therefore rejected, and clothed himself with that paternal custom which becomes the shepherd and teacher, going about and opening his mouth in order to give instruction. See Matthew v. Rightly, therefore, was the prophet not content with saying, "*Give ear, O my people, to my law:*" he adds, "*Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.*" Thus he indicates that he was about to address and instruct them with paternal affection.—*Musculus.*

Verse 2.—"*Parable.*" "*Dark sayings.*" מָשָׁל, *an authoritative weighty speech or saying.* The Hebrew term very nearly answers to the Greek, κύριαι δόξαι, i.e., *authoritative sentences or maxims*, or *weighty sayings*, expressing or implying *a comparison*, as such sayings frequently do. חִידָה *an enigma, a parable*, which penetrates the mind, and when understood makes a deep impression of what is intended or represented by it. Here חִידוֹת seems to refer to the historical facts mentioned in the subsequent part of the Psalm, considered as *enigmas* of spiritual concerns.—*John Parkhurst.*

Verse 2.—"*Parable.*" Parables are the speeches of wise men, yea, they are the extracts and spirits of wisdom. The Hebrew word signifies to rule, or have authority, because such speeches come upon us with authority, and subdue our reason by the weight of theirs.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 2.—"*I will utter.*" The metaphor in this word is taken from a fountain which pours forth water abundantly. For נָבַע properly means to gush forth, or bubble up. The heart of teachers in the Church ought to be full, and ready

to pour forth those streams by which the Church is watered. Their spring ought not to become exhausted, and fail in the summer.—*Mollerus.*

Verse 3.—"*Which we have heard and known.*" We have "*heard*" the *law* and "*known*" the *facts.*—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 3.—"*Fathers.*" Those are worthy of the name of *fathers* in the church, in relation to posterity, who transmit to posterity the truth of God contained in Scripture, such as here is set down in this Psalm: and this is the only infallible sort of tradition, which delivereth to posterity what God delivered to the prophets or their predecessors by Scripture, such as is the doctrine delivered in this Psalm.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 4.—"*We will not hide them from their children,*" etc. Thou must not only praise God thyself, but endeavour to transmit the memorial of his goodness to posterity. Children are their parents' heirs; it were unnatural for a father, before he dies, to bury up his treasure in the earth, where his children should not find or enjoy it; now the mercies of God are not the least part of a good man's treasure, nor the least of his children's inheritance, being both helps to their faith, matter for their praise, and spurs to their obedience. "Our fathers have told us what works thou didst in their days, how thou didst drive out the heathen," etc., Psalm xliv. 1, 2; from this they ground their confidence, verse 4, "Thou art my King, O God; command deliverances for Jacob," and excite their thankfulness, verse 8, "In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever." Indeed, as children are their parents' heirs, so they become in justice liable to pay their parents' debts; now the great debt which the saint at death stands charged with, is that which he owes to God for his mercies, and, therefore, it is but reason he should tie his posterity to the payment thereof. Thus mayest thou be praising God in heaven and earth at the same time.—*William Gurnall.*

Verses 4—6.—The cloth that is dyed in the wool will keep colour best. Disciples in youth will prove anards as sure. Use and experience strengthen and confirm in any art or science. The longer thy child hath been brought up in Christ's school, the more able he will be to find out Satan's wiles and fallacies, and to avoid them. The longer he hath been at the trade the more skill and delight will he have in worshipping and enjoying the blessed God. The tree when it is old stands strongly against the wind just as it was set when it was young.

The children of Merindal so answered one another in the matters of religion, before the persecuting Bishop of Cavallon, that a stander-by said unto the bishop, I must needs confess I have often been at the disputations of the doctors in the Sorbonne, but I never learned so much as by these children. Seven children at one time suffered martyrdom with Symphrosia, a godly matron, their mother. Such a blessing doth often accompany religious breeding; therefore Julian the apostate, to hinder the growth and increase of Christianity, would not suffer children to be taught either human or divine learning.

Philip was glad that Alexander was born while Aristotle lived, that he might be instructed by Aristotle in philosophy. It is no mean mercy that thy children are born in the days of the gospel, and in a valley of vision, a land of light, where they may be instructed in Christianity. Oh, do not fail, therefore, to acquaint thy children with the nature of God, the natures and offices of Christ, their own natural sinfulness and misery, the way and means of their recovery, the end and errand for which they were sent into the world, the necessity of regeneration and a holy life, if ever they would escape eternal death! Alas! how is it possible they should ever arrive at heaven if they know not the way thither?

The inhabitants of Mitylene, sometime the lords of the sea, if any of their neighbours revolted, did inflict this punishment,—they forbade them to instruct their children, esteeming this a sufficient revenge.—(*Strabo*). Reader.

if thou art careless of this duty, I would ask thee what wrong thy children have done thee that thou shouldst revenge thyself by denying them that which is their due. I mean pious instruction.

The Jewish rabbis speak of a very strict custom and method for the instruction of their children, according to their age and capacity. At five years old they were *filii legis*, sons of the law, to read it. At thirteen they were *filii præcepti*, sons of the precept, to understand the law. At fifteen they were *Talmudistæ*, and went to deeper points of the law, even to Talmudic doubts. As thy children grow up, so do thou go on to instruct them in God's will. They are "born like the wild ass's colt," Job xi. 12—that is, unruly, foolish, and ignorant. We often call a fool an ass, but here it is a "wild ass," which is more silly and untractable than a tame one; nay, it is a "wild ass's colt," which is most rude, unruly, and foolish. How, then, shall thy ignorant children come to know God or themselves without instruction?

Thy duty is to acquaint thy children with the works of God. Teach them his doings as well as his sayings. "Take heed to thyself, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons," Deut. iv. 9. God's wonders should be had in everlasting remembrance. "He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered," Ps. cxi. 4. Now, one special way to do this is by writing them in our children's memories, hereby they are transmitted to posterity. This was the godly practice of the patriarchs, to instruct their children concerning the creation of the world, trangression of man, destruction of the old world, God's providence, the Messiah to be revealed, and the like. The parents' mouths were large books, in which their children did read the noble acts of the Lord. The precept is here urged [verses 2—7] upon a double ground, *partly for God's praise*, in the perpetuity of his worthy deeds: his words are of great weight, and therefore, as curious pictures or precious jewels, must in memory of him be bequeathed from father to son whilst the world continueth. If they are written on paper or parchment they may perish (and is it not a thousand pities that such excellent records should be lost?); but if they be written by fathers successfully on their children's hearts, no time shall blot or wear them out, Exod. xii. 26, 27. Therefore, as the rabbis observe, the night before the passover the Jews (to keep God's mercies in memory to his honour) were wont to confer with their children on this wise. The child said, Why is it called the passover? The father said, Because the angel passed over us when it slew the Egyptians, and destroyed us not. The child said, Why do we eat unleavened bread? The father answered, Because we were forced to hasten out of Egypt. The child said, Why do we eat bitter herbs? The father answered, To mind us of our afflictions in Egypt.

But the duty is also urged, *partly for their own profit*, verse 7, "*That they might set their hope in God*," etc. Acquaintance with God's favour will encourage their faith; knowledge of his power will help them to believe his promise. Reader, obedience to this precept may tend much to thy own and thy children's profit. By teaching thy children God's actions, thou wilt fix them the faster, and they will make the greater impression, upon thy own spirit. A frequent mention of things is the best art of memory: what the mouth preacheth often the mind will ponder much. Besides, it may work for thy children's weal; the more they be acquainted with the goodness, wisdom, power, and faithfulness of God which appear in his works, the more they will fear, love, and trust him.—*George Swinnock.*

Verse 5.—"*He established a testimony in Jacob*," etc. The meaning is, that God ordained a law, and commanded that the fathers should each one tell his children those things which he had learned from his parents. In this verse therefore we understand by "*testimony*" and "*law*," that particular law which is written in Deut. iv. 9 in these words: "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and

lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons."—*Simon de Muis.*

Verse 5.—By the "*testimony*" and "*law*" are meant the whole contents of the Pentateuch, the direct commandments contained in it, and the deeds of the Lord, which are to be considered as indirect commandments: for all the deeds of God contain a kernel of instruction, of duty, and of warning; "I have done this for thee, what dost thou for me?"—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 5.—"*To their children.*" He who learns the law in his youth, resembles him that writes easily on new and pliable parchment; but he who begins to learn it in his old age, is like a man that tries to write on old and shrivelled parchment.—*John Van den Driesche*, [*Drusius.*] 1550—1616.

Verses 5, 6.—Five generations appear to be mentioned: 1. "Fathers;" 2. "Their children;" 3. "The generation to come;" 4. "And their children;" 5. And their children.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 6.—Children should earnestly hearken to the instruction of their parents that they themselves may afterwards be able to tell the same to their sons, and so a golden chain be formed, wherewith being bound together, the whole family may seek the skies. Whilst the father draws the son, the son the grandson, the grandson his children to Christ, as the magnet of them all, that they all may be made one.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 7.—"*Set their hope in God.*" Their hope was to be set not in the law which punishes, but in grace freely given which redeems; therefore is it added "*and not forget the works of God.*"—*Johannes De Turrecremata.* 1476.

Verse 8.—"*And might not be as their fathers.*" The warning is taken from an example at home. He does not say, That they might not be as the nations, which know not God: but, That they might not be "*as their fathers.*" Domestic examples of vice are much more pernicious than foreign ones. Hence one says: *Sic natura jubet, velocius et citius nos corrumpunt vitiorum exempla domestica.* Let us learn from this place, that it is not safe in all things to cleave to the footsteps of our fathers. He speaks of those fathers who perished in the wilderness: of whom, see Num. xiv., Deut. i., and Ps. lxviii. 6. —*Musculus.*

Verse 8.—"*As their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation.*" Forasmuch as this bad emulation of their ancestors is with difficulty plucked from the minds of men, because of our innate reverence for our fathers, the prophet heaps up words in the description of the crimes of their fathers. He says they were דור סורר, that is, a generation detracting from the authority of God, and continually breaking the bonds of the law, and in their petulance shaking off the yoke, as a violent and refractory horse, or an untamed bullock, enduring not the rein, or refusing to yield its neck to the yoke, but constantly drawing back and rejecting the bridle.—*Mollerus.*

Verses 8, 9.—Look carefully to the ground of thy active obedience, that it be sound and sincere. The same right principles whereby the sincere soul acts for Christ, will carry him to suffer for Christ, when a call from God comes with such an errand. "The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle." Why? what is the matter? so well armed, and yet so cowardly? This seems strange: read the preceding verse and you will cease wondering; they are called there, "*A generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.*" Let the armour be what it will, yea, if soldiers were in a castle, whose foundations were rock, and walls brass; yet if their hearts be not right to their prince, an easy storm will drive them from the walls, and a little scare open their gate, which hath not this bolt of sincerity on it to hold it fast. In our law were we have [illegible] the hearts within thin and weak works were cold be [illegible] defend treachery from betraying trust.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 9.—"*The children of Ephraim, being armed,*" etc. "When ye had girded on every man his weapons of war, ye were ready to go up into the hill And the Lord said unto me, Say unto them, Go not up, neither fight; for I am not among you; lest ye be smitten before your enemies. So I spake unto you; and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord, and went presumptuously up into the hill. And the Amorites, which dwelt in that mountain, came out against you, and chased you, as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah." Deut. i. 41—44.

Verse 9.—Many persons suppose the passage to refer to the event recorded in 1 Chron. vii. 21, 22, where are mentioned the sons of Ephraim, "whom the men of Gath that were born in the land slew, because they came down to take away their cattle. And Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him." The manner of the relation shews that the slaughter must have been great; and this flight and defeat, and their not acknowledging their dependence upon God, it is supposed the psalmist has in view in this place. But the objection to this interpretation is, that the event referred to in the book of Chronicles, evidently occurred at a time anterior to that of the Israelitish exodus from Egypt; whilst the 11th verse of this Psalm speaks of these same Ephraimites being forgetful of God's doings and wonderful works which he did at the time of their exit from Egypt. It is, therefore, more probable that בְּנֵי אֶפְרַיִם may designate the Israelitish people generally, which Mendlessohn thinks to be the case. He observes that "the meaning of the noun Ephraim was that of a general term for Israel before the reigning of the house of David, because that Joshua the son of Nun, the first judge, was of this tribe; also because the territory assigned to this tribe was in the region of Shiloh: and it is possible that because of the reputation of this tribe in those days, all those who were in high esteem were also called Ephraimites." He might have added another and stronger reason than any of the preceding for this application of the term to Israel, and it is, that Jeroboam, who may be regarded as the founder of the Israelitish monarchy, is said, in 1 Kings xi. 26, to have been a descendant of Ephraim. The war alluded to may have been one of those which were waged between the ten tribes and the people of Judah.—*George Phillips.*

Verse 10.—"*Walk in his law.*" Note, we must walk in the law of God, this is that narrow and sacred way which Christ traces before us. At Athens there was ἱερα ὁδος, the sacred way, by which, as Harpocratio relates, the priests of the mysteries travelled to Eleusin. At Rome also there was a way which was called *Via Sacra.* To us also there is a way to the skies, consecrated by the footsteps of the saints. It behoves us therefore not to loiter, but to be ever on the march.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 12.—"*Zoan.*" The name of a city in Egypt (Numb. xiii. 22), though it be not set down in the story in Exodus, is twice specified by the writer of this psalm, here, and verse 43, as the scene wherein the wondrous works were wrought on Pharaoh by Moses; either because really the first and principal of the miracles were shewed Pharaoh there, this city being the seat of the king, and a most ancient city, as appears by the expression used of Hebron, in Numbers xiii. 22, where to set out the antiquity of that city, where Abraham, the tenth from Noah, dwelt, 'tis said, that "it was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt;" or perhaps only in poetical style, as "the field" or country of Zoan, is all one with the "land of Egypt" foregoing. Thus, in other prophetic writings, when judgments are threatened, instead of "Egypt" sometimes we find "Zoan" alone, Isai. xix. 11, where "the princes of Zoan" are all one with the counsellors of Pharaoh; sometimes "the princes of Zoan," with the addition of some other city, as verse 13, "the princes of Zoan, the princes of Noph," *i.e.*, again, the counsellors of their kingdom, which as it follows, "have seduced Egypt,"—brought the whole nation to ruin. So Isai. xxx. 4, where they send to

Egypt for relief, 'tis said, their "princes were at Zoan, their ambassadors at Hanes."—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 12.—"*In the field of Zoan.*" We see in this passage that it was not without reason that God most powerfully displayed his wondrous works, his virtue and his glory in the more famous cities: not that he despised the humbler and obscure, but that he might more conveniently in this way scatter abroad the knowledge and renown of his name. For this cause he desired Moses to perform his miracles in the royal city, and in its *field*; for the same reason he afterwards fixed his dwelling-place in the most famous city of Canaan, in which he decreed also that Christ his Son should be crucified and the foundation of his heavenly kingdom laid.—*Musculus.*

Verse 13.—"*He made the waters to stand as an heap.*" The original word imports, those great heaps which are made use of as dykes or banks to restrain the waters. But the Jews have not only understood these expressions literally, but have likewise taken upon them to add particular circumstances, as if the history had been so concise, that it wanted to be supplied therewith. They say, that the sea had formed, as it were, twelve roads or causeways, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites.—*James Saurin.*

Verse 13.—"*He made the waters to stand as an heap.*" God did not wish altogether to take the sea from the gaze of the Hebrews, but to interrupt and divide it, that like a wall it might stand firm on either side of the way. This was done, first, that the miracle might be evident, for in that sea there is no tidal rise or fall of the waters. Secondly, that the people might have greater joy at the sight of so great a miracle. Thirdly, that in their whole passage they might depend more upon the providence of God, who, in a single moment, could allow the sea to return to its bed and drown all of them. It is God's will that we should flee to him the more ardently at the aspect of present danger. Fourthly and lastly, that the people might pass over the more rapidly, since they knew not how long God wished the miracle to last.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 14.—That there was a mystery in this *pillar of cloud and fire* is clear from Isaiah iv. 5, 6, for there never was a *literal* cloud and fire upon Mount Zion. This fiery pillar did cease when they were entered into Canaan; Isaiah therefore intends a *spiritual* thing under those expressions. So it is represented by the Apostle as representing a gospel-mystery: 1 Cor. x. 2. It signified and shadowed forth, 1. Something of *Christ himself*; 2. The *benefits* of Christ; 3. The *ordinances* of Christ.

1. *Christ himself.* — Some have made a shadow both of his *Deity* and *humanity*. There was a *fiery brightness* in the cloud, which yet was but a dark shadow of the glory of his Deity, which was often in visions so represented; but his divine nature was veiled and over-clouded by his human, as in this shadow there was a pillar of *cloud* as well as *fire*. In Rev. x. 1, Christ is represented as *clothed with a cloud, and his feet as pillars of fire*; expressions notably answering this ancient type and shadow. 2. It holds forth something of the *benefits* of Christ. What benefits had they from this pillar of fire and cloud? They had three. (1) Light and direction. (2) Defence and protection. (3) Ornament and glory. All which we have in a higher manner in Christ by the gospel. 3. It figured also the *ordinances*, and his presence in and with them; for the ordinances are the outward and visible tokens of God's presence with his people, as this fiery pillar was of old. And, therefore, when the Tabernacle was made and set up, *it rested upon the Tabernacle*, Exodus xl. 38. There are some duties are secret, which the world sees not, nor may see; as alms-deeds and personal and secret prayer. But the *ordinances* of institution are things that ought to be practised with all the publickness that may be: they are outward and visible tokens of God's presence, particularly that great ordinance of *baptism*, as in 1 Cor. x. 2. The cloud, it seems, had a refreshing moisture in it, to shade, refresh, and cool them from the burning heat; and they were bedewed*

* Rather "*baptised*" in it, as Paul puts it in 1 Cor. x. 2.

with it, as we are with the water of baptism; whereby this legal cloud became a type of gospel baptism. And so you see how it represented something of *Christ himself*, and something of his *benefits*, and something of all his *ordinances* under the New Testament.—*Samuel Mather.*

Verse 14.—"*All the night.*" We need not dwell long upon the thought of what this "*all*" was to the Israelites. In night *marchings*, and night restings, it was very precious; whether they were in motion or at rest, it was alike needed, alike good. This light of fire, unless continuous, would have been of comparatively little worth. Were it suddenly extinguished as they marched, all Israel would have been plunged into confusion and dismay; the quenching of the light would have changed into a disordered rabble, the marshalled host.—*Philip Bennett Power, in "Breviates: or Short Texts and their Teachings."*

Verse 15.—"*The rocks.*" They were typical of Christ, 1 Cor. x. 4; who is frequently compared to one for height, strength, and duration, shade, shelter, and protection; and is called the "Rock of Israel," the "Rock of offence to both houses of Israel," the "Rock of salvation," the "Rock of refuge," the "Rock of strength," the "Rock that is higher than" the saints, and on which the church is built, and who is "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."—*John Gill.*

Verse 15.—"*Gave them drink as out of the great depths.*" As if he had formed a lake or an ocean, furnishing an inexhaustible supply.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 16.—"*He brought streams also out of the rock,*" etc. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." The second murmuring for water at Kadesh seems to have been a more aggravated act of rebellion than the former, and yet the water is given in greater abundance. Oh, the freeness of the sovereign grace of God!—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 17.—"*And they sinned yet more against him.*" He does not say that they sinned only, but that they sinned against God. "*And they sinned yet more against him,*" namely, *God.* Against what God? Against him who had delivered them by great and unheard of wonders out of Egypt, who had led them as free men across the Red Sea with a dry foot, who had continued to lead and to protect them with pillars of cloud and fire by day and night, and had given them to drink abundantly of water drawn from the arid rock. Against this God they had added sin to sin. Simply to sin is human, and happens to the saints even after they have received grace: but to sin against God argues a singular degree of impiety. To sin against God is to injure and dishonour him in things immediately pertaining to himself. So they sinned against God, because after so many distinguished proofs and testimonies of his care made manifest to them, they continued to think and speak evil against him. All sins indeed, of whatever class they may be, are done against God, because they are opposed to his will; but those which are committed peculiarly against God, are certainly greater than others. Such are those wrought against his name, goodness, providence, power, truth, and worship, and against those things which specially concern him, whatever they may be. So we read of the sins of the sons of Eli, 1 Sam. ii. 24, 25: "It is no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord's people to transgress. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him?"—*Musculus.*

Verse 17.—"*They sinned yet more.*" Their sin was not murmuring only, sinful as that is, but *uncontrolled desire*. And for what was that desire? It was for meat. They had grown so weary of the bread of heaven which God so mercifully provided; and they wanted something in addition—something, too, which was not absolutely necessary to their existence. When they murmured for water at Massah, they murmured for something *needful*. Their sin *then* was in *murmuring*, instead of *praying*. But here they lusted for something *unnecessary*,

and this was an aggravation of their sin. And thus the psalmist, evidently comparing this sin with the murmuring at Massah, says, "They sinned *yet more* against him."—*George Wagner, in "The Wanderings of the Children of Israel."*

Verse 18.—"*They tempted God in their heart.*" They tempted God, tried his patience over and over again, made as it were another experiment upon it; and, from the expression of "*tempting him in their heart*," it would seem as if they had made it a thing of mental calculation whether he would still bear with them.—*Thomas Chalmers* (1780—1847), *in "Daily Scripture Readings."*

Verse 18.—"*They tempted God.*" We know that, although "God cannot be tempted with evil," he may justly be said to be tempted, whensoever men, by being dissatisfied with his dealings, virtually ask that he will alter those dealings, and proceed in a way more congenial with their feelings. If you reflect a little, you can hardly fail to perceive, that in a very strict sense, this and the like may be said to be a tempting of God. Suppose a man to be discontented with the appointments of Providence; suppose him to murmur and repine at what the Almighty allots him to do or to bear: is he not to be charged with provoking God to change his purposes? and what is this if it be not "tempting" God a striving to induce him to swerve from his plans, though every one of those plans has been settled by infinite wisdom? Or, again, if any one of us, notwithstanding multiplied proofs of the Divine loving-kindness, doubt or question whether God do indeed love him; of what is he guilty, if not of tempting the Lord, seeing that he solicits God to give additional evidence, as though there were deficiency, and challenges him to fresh demonstrations of what he has already abundantly displayed? This would be called "*tempting*" amongst men. If a child were to show by his actions that he doubted or disbelieved the affection of his parents, he would be considered as thereby striving to extort from them fresh proofs of that affection, though they had already done as much as either in justice or in wisdom they ought to have done; this would be a clear tempting of them, and that too in the ordinary sense of the term. In short, unbelief of every kind and degree may be said to be a tempting of God; for not to believe on the evidence which he has seen fit to give, is to tempt him to give more than he has already given — offering our possible assent, if proof were increased, as an inducement to him to go beyond what his wisdom has prescribed. . . . You cannot distrust God, and not accuse him of a want either of power or of goodness; you cannot repine,—no, not even in thought—without virtually telling him that his plans are not the best, nor his dispensations the wisest, which might have been appointed in respect of yourselves. So that your fear, or your despondency, or your anxiety in circumstances of perplexity, or of peril, is nothing less than a call upon God to depart from his fixed course,—a suspicion, or rather an assertion, that he might proceed in a manner more worthy of himself, and therefore a challenge to him to alter his dealings, if he would prove that he possesses the attributes which he claims. You may not intend thus to accuse, or provoke God, whenever you murmur; but your murmuring does all this, and cannot fail to do it. You cannot be dissatisfied, without virtually saying that God might order things better; you cannot say that he might order things better, without virtually demanding that he change his course of acting, and give other proofs of his infinite perfections. And thus you *tempt* him, tempt him even as did the Israelites in the wilderness.—*Henry Melvill.*

Verse 18.—"*Asking meat for their lust.*" God had given them meat for their hunger in the manna, wholesome, pleasant food, and in abundance; he had given them meat for their faith, out of the heads of Leviathan which he brake in pieces, Ps. lxxiv. 14. But all this would not serve, they must have meat "*for their lust;*" dainties and varieties to gratify a luxurious appetite. Nothing is more provoking to God, than our quarrelling with our allowance, and indulging the desires of the flesh.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 19. It is particularly to be observed, that the sin of which the children of Israel were on this occasion guilty, was not in wishing for bread and water, but in thinking for one moment, that after the Lord had brought them out of Egypt, he would suffer them for the lack of any needful thing, to come short of Canaan. It was no sin to be hungry and thirsty; it was a necessity of their nature. There is nothing living that does not desire and require food: when we do not we are dead, and that they did so was no sin. Their sin was *to doubt either that God could or would support them in the wilderness, or allow those who followed his leadings to lack any good thing.* This was their sin. It is just the same with the Christian now. These Israelites did not more literally require a supply of daily food for their bodies, than does the Christian for his soul. Not to do so is a sign of death, and the living soul would soon die without it. And so far from its being a sin, our Lord has pronounced that man blessed who hungers and thirsts after righteousness, adding the most precious promise, that all such shall be satisfied. But it is a sin, and very great sin, should this food not be perceptibly, and to the evidence of our senses, immediately supplied, to murmur and be fearful. It was for *the trial of their faith* that these things happened to the Israelites, as do the trials of all Christians in all ages: and it is "after we have suffered a while" that we may expect to be established, strengthened, settled.—*Brownlow North, in "Ourselves. A Picture sketched from the History of the Children of Israel."* [1865.]

Verses 19, 20.—After all their experience, they doubted the divine omnipotence, as if it were to be regarded as nothing, when it refused to gratify their lusts. Unbelief is so deeply rooted in the human heart, that when God performs miracles on *earth*, unbelief doubts whether he can perform them in *heaven*, and when he does them in *heaven*, whether he can do them on *earth?*—*Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 20.—"*Can he give bread also?*" They should have said, "Will he serve our lusts?" but that they were ashamed to say.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 20.—Who will say that a man is thankful to his friend for a past kindness, if he nourishes an ill opinion of him for the future? This was all that ungrateful Israel returned to God, for his miraculously broaching the rock to quench their thirst: "Behold, he smote the rock,"—"*Can he give bread also?*" This, indeed, was their trade all the time they were in the wilderness. Wherefore, God gives them their character, not by what they seemed to be while his mercies were before them; then they could say, "God was their rock, and the High God their Redeemer;" but by their temper and carriage in straits; when the cloth was drawn, and the feast taken out of their sight, what opinion then had they of God? Could they sanctify his name so far as to trust him for their dinner to-morrow who had feasted them yesterday? Truly no, as soon as they feel their hunger return, like froward children, they are crying, as if God meant to starve them. Wherefore, God rejects their praises, and owns not their hypocritical acknowledgments, but sets their ingratitude upon record; they forgot his works, and waited not for his counsel. O how sad is this, that after God hath entertained a soul at his table with choice mercies and deliverances, these should be so ill husbanded, that not a bit of them should be left to give faith a meal, to keep the heart from fainting, when God comes not so fast to deliver as desired. He is the most thankful man that treasures up the mercies of God in his memory, and can feed his faith with what God hath done for him, so as to walk in the strength thereof in present straits.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 23.—"*Opened the doors of heaven.*" There is an allusion here to the flood, as in verse 15.—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 23.—"*Opened the doors of heaven.*" God, who has the key of the clouds, "*opened the doors of heaven,*" that is more than *opening the windows*, which yet is spoken of as a great blessing, Mal. iii. 10.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 23.—"*Opened the doors of heaven.*" This is a metaphor taken from a granary, from which corn is brought; and by *opening the doors* is signified, that the manna fell very plentifully. Compare Gen. vii. 11.—*Thomas Fenton.*

Verses 24, 25.—"*Manna.*" The prophet celebrates this miracle, *first*, because of the unusual place whence the manna was sent. For he did not produce fruits from the earth wherewith to feed them, but rained down this food from the clouds, and from the depths of the skies. *Secondly*, because of the facility of the distribution. By the command of God alone, without any labour of men, yea, while they slept, this food was prepared. Therefore is it said, "*He gave*," etc. *Thirdly*, he celebrates its great abundance which sufficed to supply so great a multitude. *Fourthly*, the excellence of the food. He calls it the food of the excellent or the strong, such as was not pleasant merely to the common multitude, but to the princes also, and to the heroes, for it was the food of "*the mighty ones.*"—*Mollerus.*

Verse 25.—"*Man.*" Rather, as Exodus xvi. 6, "*every* man." Not one of them was left without it.—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 25.—"*Man did eat angels' food.*" 'Tis called "*angels' food*," not because the angels do daily feed upon it, but because it was both made and ministered by the ministry of angels, and that phrase sets forth the excellency of it.—*Christopher Ness* (1621—1705), *in* "*The Sacred History and Mystery of the Old Testament.*"

Verse 25.—"*Angels' food.*" Manna is called *the bread of angels* because it was brought down by their ministry; and it was so pleasant in taste, that if the angels had eaten bread, it might have served them.—*John Weemse.*

Verse 25.—"*Angels' food.*" So their manna was called, either, 1. because it was provided and sent by the ministry of angels; or, 2. because it seemed to come down from heaven, the dwelling-place of the angels; or, 3. to set forth the excellency of this bread, that it was meat, as one would say, fit for angels, if angels needed meat. And so, indeed, the exceeding glory of Stephen's countenance is set forth by this, that they "saw his face as it had been the face of an angel," Acts vi. 15; and Paul calls an excellent tongue, "the tongue of angels," 1 Cor. xiii. 1.—*Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 25.—The more excellent the benefit is which God giveth, the greater is the ingratitude of him who doth not esteem of it and make use of it as becometh; as we see in Israel's sin, who did not esteem of manna as they should have done. Had the Lord fed them with dust of earth, or roots of grass, or any other mean thing, they should have had no reason to complain: but when he giveth them a new food, created every morning for their sakes, sent down from heaven as fresh furniture every day, of such excellent colour, taste, smell and wholesomeness; what a provocation of God was it, not to be content now; in special, when he gave them abundantly of it? "He sent them meat to the full."—*David Dickson.*

Verse 26.—"*He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind.*" Here, on examining the geographical position of the Israelites, we see exactly how the south-east wind would bring the "*quails*." The Israelites had just passed the Red Sea, and had began to experience a foretaste of the privations which they were to expect in the desert, through which they had to pass. Passing northwards in their usual migrations, the birds would come to the coast of the Red Sea, and there would wait until a favourable wind enabled them to cross the water. The south-east wind afforded them just the very assistance which they needed, and they would naturally take advantage of it.—*J. G. Wood, in* "*Bible Animals.*" 1869.

Verse 27.—"*As dust.*" The amazing clouds of fine dust or sand, which a violent wind raises in the deserts of the East, constitute the point of comparison.—*William Keatinge Clay.*

Verse 27.—"*Feathered fowls.*" Hebrew, "fowl of wing;" *i.e.*, flying fowls, in distinction from domestic poultry.—*Williams, in Notes to Calvin in loc.*

Verses 27, 31.—If the cemetery on Sarbut-el-Khadem be, what all the antecedent evidences combine to indicate, the workmanship of the Israelites, (a chief burial-ground of their fatal encampment at Kibroth-Hattaavah), it may most reasonably be expected that its monuments shall contain symbolic representations of the miracle of the "feathered fowls," and of the awful plague which followed it. Now Niebuhr happily enables us to meet this just expectation, by his copies of the hieroglyphics on three of those tombstones, published in the XLVth. and XLVIth. plates of his first volume, and prefaced plate XLIV. by *a plan of the cemetery itself*, which is of more value than any or all subsequent descriptions. It was discovered by the present writer (as stated in a former work, ["The Voice of Israel"] on the evidence of no less than four Sinaitic inscriptions, that the birds of the miracle, named by Moses, generically, שְׂלָו, *salu*, and by the psalmist, still more generally, עוֹף כָּנָף, "*winged fowls*," or more correctly "long-winged fowls," were not (as rendered by all our versions, ancient and modern) "*quails*," but a crane-like red bird resembling a goose, named in the Arabic *nuham*. The discovery received subsequently a singular and signal corroboration from the further discovery, by Dean Stanley, and previously by Schubert, of immense flocks of these very nuhams on the reputed scene of the miracle at Kibroth-Hattaavah. With these antecedents in his mind, the reader will now turn to the three monuments copied by Niebuhr in the cemetery of Sarbut-el-Khadem. He will at once see that a crane-like bird resembling a goose, with slender body and long-legs, is the leading hieroglyphic symbol in all the three tablets. No fewer than twenty-five of these symbolic birds occur in the first, ten in the second, and fifteen in the third tablet. The goose appears occasionally, but the principal specimens have the air of the goose, but the form of the crane. In a word, they are the very species of birds seen by Dean Stanley, both at this point of Sinai, and at the first cataract of the Nile; and which constantly occur also in Egyptian monuments: as though the very food of Egypt, after which the Israelites lusted, was sent to be at once their prey and their plague. "And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, *when we sat by the flesh pots.*" Exod. xvi. 3.

The reader has here before him the irrefragable fact that the very birds which by every kind of evidence stand identified with the *salus*, or long-legged and long-winged fowls of the miracle, are the very birds depicted on the tombstones of Sarbut-el-Khadem, both standing, flying, and apparently even trussed and cooked. . . . The inevitable inference is . . . that these tombstones record the miracle of the "feathered fowls," and stand over the graves of the gluttons who consumed them.—*Charles Forster, in "Israel in the Wilderness."* 1865.

Mr. Forster thus deciphers by his alphabet some of the mixed legends and devices:—

> "From the sea the cranes congregate to one spot;
> The archers shoot at the cranes passing over the plain.
> Evil-stomached they rush after the prey—
> The sepulchre their doom—their marrow corrupted by God.
> The sleepy owl, emblem of death, God sends destruction among them.
>
> * * * * * * *
>
> The mother of sepulchres—the black and white geese,
> A sudden death, greedily lusting after flesh, die the gluttons.
> The mountain top ascend the Hebrews,
> They eat, devour, consume, till nothing is left, exceeding all bounds,
> Their bodies corrupted, by gluttony they die."

Verse 29.—Note: The prophet in this Psalm institutes, as it were, a conflict between God and man. God contends with blessings, man with sins. God exerts his power for the benefit of undeserving man, v. 12. "Marvellous

things did he in the sight of their fathers:" man repays the divine power with infidelity v. 17, "And they sinned yet more against him." And farther on, in v. 19, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" *Secondly*, God showers down his bounty to overwhelm ungrateful sinners with his gifts, v. 23, "He commanded the clouds from above, &c., and rained down manna upon them." These less than men (*homunciones*) oppose their gluttony to the liberality of God, and abuse the gifts conferred, v. 29, "They did eat, and were well filled." *Thirdly*, divine justice renews the conflict to scourge at once stupidity out of them, v. 30, 31, "While their meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them." Still obdurate they kick against the goad, v. 32, "For all this they sinned still." *Fourthly*, mercy flies down from heaven, to invite them to peace, v. 38, "But he being full of compassion." Men are but emboldened by his compassion, and the more easily relapse into sin, v. 40, "How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness?" *Fifthly*, and *lastly*, when all seems lost, love draws nigh, and performs unheard-of wonders, to touch their hardness, and to deliver them from the dangers by which they were pressed, v. 43, "How he set his signs in Egypt." To these shafts of his love sinners oppose a forgetfulness of all his benefits, v. 42, "They remembered not his hand nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy." And all this took place before they entered the land of promise. The conflict that happened between the Hebrews and God in the land of promise is related in the next section of the Psalm.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 30.—"*They were not estranged from their lust.*" This implies, that they were still burning with their lust. If it is objected that this does not agree with the preceding sentence, where it is said, that "they did eat, and were thoroughly filled," I would answer, that if, as is well known, the minds of men are not kept within the bounds of reason and temperance, they become insatiable; and, therefore, a great abundance will not extinguish the fire of a depraved appetite.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 30.—"*They were not estranged from their lust.*" Satiated they were, but not satisfied. It is as easy to quench the fire of Etna, as the thoughts set on fire by lust.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 30.—"*They were not estranged from their lust.*" Consider that there is more real satisfaction in mortifying lusts than in making provision for them or in fulfilling them: there's more true pleasure in crossing and pinching our flesh than in gratifying it; were there any true pleasure in sin, hell would not be hell, for the more sin, the more joy. You cannot satisfy one lust if you would do your utmost, and make yourself never so absolute a slave to it; you think if you had your heart's desire you would be at rest: you much mistake; they had it.—*Alexander Carmichael.*

Verse 31.—"*The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them.*" Two things are here worthy of notice. 1. One, Why he gave them abundance and sufficiency of quails, and afterwards punished the murmuring and unbelieving. If he had punished them before, he would have appeared to have had greater ability to destroy them, than to give them flesh. Therefore, that he might first declare his power, and so make the unbelief of the people the more plain, and show how deserving they were of punishment, he first showed he could give, because they believed he could not, and then punished them for their unbelief. . . . . 2. The other, that he destroyed the fat and the chosen men among the people, although they all are said to have murmured. Without a doubt, they were first in the crime, and therefore they are specially mentioned in the punishment.—*Musculus.*

Verse 31.—"*Slew the fattest of them.*" They were fed as sheep for the slaughter. The butcher takes the fattest first. We may suppose there were some pious and contented Israelites that did eat moderately of the quails, and were never the worse; for it was not the meat that poisoned them, but their

own lust. Let epicures and sensualists here read their doom; they who make "*a god of their belly, their end is destruction*," Phil. iii. 19.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verses 31—34.—The Christian has more true pleasure from the creature than the wicked, as it comes more refined to him than to the other. The unholy wretch sucks dregs and all, dregs of sin and dregs of wrath, whereas the Christian's cup is not thus spiced. *First*, dregs of sin; the more he hath of the creature's delights given him, the more he sins with them. Oh, it is sad to think what work they make in his naughty heart! they are but fuel for his lusts to kindle upon; away they run with their enjoyments, as the prodigal with his bags, or like hogs in shaking time; no sight is to be had of them, or thought of their return as long as they can get anything abroad, among the delights of the world. None so prodigiously wicked as those who are fed high with carnal pleasures. They are to the ungodly as the dung and ordure is to the swine which grows fat by lying in it; so their hearts grow gross and fat; their consciences more stupid and senseless in sin by them; whereas the comforts and delights that God gives unto a holy soul by the creature, turn to spiritual nourishment to his graces, and draw these forth into exercise, as they do others' lusts. *Secondly*, dregs of wrath. The Israelites had little pleasure from their dainties, when the wrath of God fell upon them, before they could get them down their throats. The sinner's feast is no sooner served in but divine justice is preparing to send up a reckoning after it, and the fearful expectation of this cannot but spoil the taste of the other.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 32.—"*For all this they sinned still.*" They went on sinning, "*and believed not for his wondrous works.*" That is, even his great *wonders* or miracles, did not bring them to believe. Neither *speculative atheism*, nor *atheism of heart*, nor *practical atheism* was ever cured by miracle, because they are all founded in a wicked disposition. "Men are not always in a mood to be convinced." It is not want of evidence, but the want of right dispositions that keeps men from believing God.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 32.—They did believe the history of his works, namely, that such things as are there recorded were done; they could not but believe that God had wrought wonders for them in Egypt, that he had drowned Pharaoh in, and brought them safe through the Red Sea: they saw these things, their senses were witnesses, but yet they did not believe the *prophecy* or *promise* which was virtually in those works, namely, that God would do more wonders for them till he had finished and accomplished their deliverance. That history of bringing through the Red Sea had this prophecy in it—that they should be brought safe to Canaan; but they did not believe the voice of this prophecy. When God gave them water out of the rock, this work promised that he would give them meat out of the clouds, if they needed it; but this they believed not. Hence the same Psalm reports their unbelief, under this notion (ver. 19, 20). "They spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?" "*When the Lord heard this* (language of unbelief) he was wroth."—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verses 32, 33.—What faith can do to a prophecy of judgment, the same can unbelief to a promise of mercy; overthrow it. The psalmist assigns this to the unbelief of the works of God, as well as of his word. "*They believed not his wondrous works. Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble:*" but are not the days of all men consumed in vanity? Is not man at his best estate altogether vanity? Yes, but here was a special vanity, and somewhat more penal and judicial lay upon that generation for their unbelief, than lies upon mankind as the fruit of sin in general. And what was that? Even the evil threatened in the text [Isa. vii. 9, latter part]: they could not be established. God lets them wander forty years in a wilderness, up and down, forward and backward; now in hope, anon in fear; now in joy, anon in sorrow; now in success, by-and-by in disappointment.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 32.—Experience ought to strengthen faith; but there must be present faith to use experience.—*J. N. Darby*, "*in Practical Reflections on the Psalms*" [1870.]

Verse 33.—"*Their days did he consume in vanity.*" He says with great significance, In vanity their days were consumed, because they were plainly deprived of their hope, and endured all their sufferings in vain. They did not attain what they had hoped for, but only their children entered the land.—*Mollerus.*

Verse 33.—"*Days*" are put in the first place, and then "*years;*" by which it is intimated, that the duration of their life was cut short by the curse of God, and that it was quite apparent that they failed in the midst of their course.—*John Calvin.*

Verses 34–36.—There are some if they come under afflictions, or if they fall in sickness, or a fever, and God shake death over their head; or if they be at some solemn ordinances, they will be at resolving and purposing, and readily bringing vows on themselves, of personal covenanting with God; but as they are easily gotten, so they easily vanish: "*When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and enquired early after God.*" Several times our afflictions are like a gutter; when there is a great shower we will be running over with purposes after God. "*Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant:*" and yet when he slew them they sought after him, and they early enquired after him: so that indeliberate actions and covenantings with God, as they are hastily begotten, they no less suddenly vanish; the action ought then to be deliberate when we indenture with the Cautioner, and oblige ourselves to more watchfulness, and more tenderness, or else it will soon vanish.—*Alexander Wedderburn, in* "*David's Testament, opened up in Fourty Sermons.*" 1701.

Verses 34—37.—In these words you see plainly that these people are very early and earnest in seeking God to take off his hand, to remove judgments that were upon them, but not that God would cure them of those sins that provoked him to draw his sword, and to make it drunk with their blood; for, notwithstanding the sad slaughters that divine justice had made among them, they did but flatter and lie, and play the hypocrites with God; they would fain be rid of their sufferings, but did not care to be rid of their sins. Ah! but a gracious soul cries out, Lord, do but take away my sins, and it will satisfy me and cheer me, though thou shouldst never take off thy heavy hand. A true Nathanael sighs it out under his greatest affliction, as that good man did, *A me, me salva, Domine,** deliver me, O Lord, from that evil man myself. No burden to the burden of sin. Lord! says the believing soul: deliver me from my inward burden, and lay upon me what outward burden thou pleasest. —*Thomas Brooks.*

Verses 34—37.—There are a sort of men that lie in the enmity of their natures, and in an unreconciled state, living in the visible church, who are not only much restrained, and bite their enmity in, but who, by means of an inferior work of the word and Spirit of God upon their hearts, are brought to seek unto God for friendship, yea, and do much for him in outward actions, and side and take part with his friends; and yet their hearts being unchanged, the cursed enmity of their nature remaining unkilled and not taken away, they lie still in the gall of bitterness. For instance, look to these in Psalm lxxviii. 34–37. It is said that they 'sought the Lord early as their Redeemer,' whilst he was a-slaying of them; yet they did but "*flatter him with their mouths,*" etc. A flatterer, you know, differs from a friend, in that he pretendeth much kindness, yet wants inward good-will, doing it for his own ends. And so do many

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seek God, that yet he accounts as enemies; for they seek him whilst they see themselves in his lurch.

Now, it is hard to discover these, because they pretend much friendship, and externally (it may be) do as many outward kindnesses as the true friends; as flatterers will abound in outward kindnesses as much as true friends, nay, often exceed them, because they may not be discovered. Now, if none of the former signs reach to them, nor touch them, then there is no better way left than to search unto the grounds of all they do, and to examine whether it proceeds from true, inward, pure, and constant good-will, yea or no, or self-respects? As now, when we see an ape do many things that a man doth, how do we therefore distinguish those actions in the one and in the other? Why, by the inward principles from whence they spring, by saying that they proceed from reason in the one, but not so in the other. If, therefore, it can be evinced, that all that any man seems to do for God, comes not from good-will to him, it is enough to convince them to be persons unreconciled; for whereas all outward kindnesses and expressions of friendship proceed not from friend-like dispositions and pure good-will, but altogether from self-respects, it is but feigned flattery, even among men; and when discovered once, it breeds double hatred. And there is much more reason it should do so with God, because he being a God that knows the heart, to flatter him is the greater mockery; for that is it which chiefly provoketh men to hate such as dissemble friendship, because there is mockery joined with it. Now, that God accounteth every one that doth not turn to him out of pure good-will a flatterer is plain by these words in verses 36, 37: "*Notwithstanding, they did but flatter him, and dealt falsely in his covenant.*" If men's hearts be not inwardly for God, and with him, as a friend would be to a friend, in their actions he esteems them against him. "Thy heart," says Peter to Simon Magus, "is not right before the Lord," Acts viii. 22, and therefore he tells him he was "still in the gall of bitterness."—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 35.—"*Redeemer.*" That is, from Egyptian bondage; for the bulk of the people did not understand the spiritual redemption which was typified by that transaction.—*Thomas Scott.*

Verse 35.—Between this and the following verse the Masorah puts this note, "*half of the book*," *i.e.*, half of the Book of Psalms ends here.—*John Gill.*

The numbering of the verses must differ from ours, for on counting the verses as in our version, we find verse 57 to be the centre verse of the book.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 36.—"*They did flatter him*," etc. But could they flatter God? Man is flattered when that is ascribed to him which he hath not, or when he is applauded for what he hath, beyond the worth of it. God cannot be flattered thus: he is as much beyond flatterings as he is beyond sufferings. The Jews, then, are said to flatter God, not because they applauded him by fair speeches more than was his due, but because by fair speeches they hoped to prevent what themselves did deserve; or they flattered God with their own promises, not with his praises. They sinned against him, and he slew them; and when the sword found them they sought God, they creeped to him and fawned upon him, they came as with ropes about their necks, confessing they were worthy to die, yet humbly begging for life: and if God would but humbly sheathe his sword and spare them, O what manner of men they would be in all holy conversation and godliness. Thus "they flattered God with their mouth, while their hearts were not right:" they made great shews of repentance and turning to God, but they meant no such thing; this was their flattery. Neither can the Lord be flattered any other way. And as he cannot be flattered by over-praising him, so his person cannot be unduly honoured by over-respecting him. —*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 36.—God may be the object, self is the end, and a heavenly object

is made subservient to a carnal design. Hypocrisy passes a compliment on God, and is called "*flattery*": "*They did flatter him with their mouth*," etc. They gave him a parcel of good words for their own preservation. . . . . An hypocrite may well be termed a religious atheist, an atheist masked with religion.—*Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 36.—"*They lied unto him with their tongues.*" The heart is the metal of the bell, the tongue is but the clapper; when the metal of the bell is right and good (as silver) such will the sound be; if the metal of the bell be cracked, or lead, the sound will soon discover it to a judicious ear. God can see the diseases and spots of the heart upon the tongue. As Jacob said to his mother, "If I dissemble, my father will find me out, and I shall meet with a curse instead of a blessing."—*George Swinnock.*

Verses 36—38.—There is no disputing the fact which gives accuracy to the text, that God was moved by a repentance which had not in it even the elements of godly sorrow for sin; which could not even, by a casual observer, much less by him who searches the heart, have been mistaken for that penitence which supposes an inward and radical change, and, nevertheless, even such a repentance as this sufficed to procure a recompense at the hands of God. Though the sackcloth was on the body and not on the soul; though it was the punishment of the sin and not the sin itself which led to this outward humiliation, God did not turn away from the forced supplication, but vouchsafed the deliverance which was sought at his hands. Yes, God, who never expresses greater abhorrence of any character than of that of the hypocrite; God, who rejects nothing more indignantly than outward homage when it is not the index of inward prostration—God may be said to have removed the humiliation of the people as though he could not read their hearts, or as though, having read them, and noted their unsubdued rebellion, he still thought the apparent contrition deserving of some recompense. . . . .

If God would not leave the show and semblance of contrition without a recompense, will he be unmindful of real penitence? If "*many a time turned he his anger away*" from those who "*did but flatter him with their mouths*, and lied unto him with their tongues," has he nothing in store for those who are humble in spirit, and who come to him with the sacrifice of a broken heart? Oh! the turning away of temporal wrath because idols were outwardly abandoned, this is a mighty pledge that eternal wrath will be averted if we are inwardly stricken, and flee for refuge to the Saviour. God must have eternal good in store for his friends, if even his enemies are recompensed with temporal good. Yes, as I mark the Philistines and the Ammonites oppressing the idolatrous Israelites, and then see the oppressors driven back in return even for heartless service, oh! I learn that true penitence for sin and true faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ will cause all enemies to be scattered; I return from the contemplation of the backsliding people, emancipated notwithstanding the known hollowness of their vows, I return assured that a kingdom which neither Philistine nor Ammonite can invade, shall be the portion of all who seek deliverance through Christ.—*Henry Melvill.*

Verse 37.—"*Their heart was not right with him.*" God pleases them when he replenishes them with food, not their heart with his graces; therefore they repay him with the mouth, and not with the heart. They are altogether mouth and tongue: but God is all heart and breast. They give words; God gives milk and perfect love. Love does not reach the inner nature of many men, it sticks in the entrance.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 37.—"*Their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast*," etc. This is the ever-repeated complaint, see verses 8, 22. There is no permanence, no stability in the reformation which has been produced. Compare Hosea vi 4.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 38.—According to *B. Kiddushin* 30*a*, this verse is the middle one of

the 5896 סמיקן, *στίχοι*, of the Psalter. According to *B. Maccoth* 22*b*, Ps. lxxviii. 38, and previously Deut. xxviii. 58, 59; xxix. 9, were recited when the forty strokes of the lash save one, which, according to 2 Cor. xi. 24, Paul received five times, were being counted out to the culprit.—*Franz Delitzch.*

Verse 38.—"*He, being full of compassion,*" etc. When his hand was up, and he giving the blow, he called it back again, as one that could not find it in his heart to do it; and when he did it, "*he did not stir up all his wrath;*" he let fall some drops of it, but would not shed the whole shower of it; and he giveth the reason of both, for "*they are but flesh;*" and, indeed, his primary scope is to show mercy; and that he afflicts is but upon occasion; and therefore he is provoked, and provoked much before he doth it. As it is natural to the bee to give honey, but it stings; but it stings but by occasion when it is provoked; and this we see to be true in God by experience, who suffers men, and suffers them long; they continue in their sins, and yet he continues in his mercies, and withholds his judgments.—*John Preston* (1587—1628), *in* "*The Golden Sceptre held forth to the Humble.*"

Verse 38.—"*Forgave*" is a very inadequate translation of the Hebrew word, which necessarily suggests the idea of expiation as the ground of pardon.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 38.—"*Many a time turned he his anger away.*" God is provoked every day, yet is he slow to anger. Yea, sometimes when he has determined to bring evil upon a people, and has put himself into a posture of judgment, drawn out the sword, and smitten them; though they cease not to provoke him, he ceaseth to punish them; as a tender father in correcting a rebellious and graceless child, holds his hand sometimes, before the child begs for mercy, and of mere grace forbears: so God did with Israel. Notwithstanding their dissembling with their flattering tongues, and covenant-breaking hearts, "*He forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.*" The words are, "*He multiplied to turn away his anger:*" as they multiplied to provoke it, he multiplied to turn it away; and so at length overnumbered their sins with his mercies, that they were not destroyed.—*John Strickland, in* "*A Sermon preached before the House of Commons,*" *entitled* "*Mercy rejoicing against Judgment.*" 1645.

Verse 38.—"*He did not stir up all his wrath.*" His patience is manifest in moderating his judgments when he sends them. Doth he empty his quiver of his arrows, or exhaust his magazine of thunder? No; he could roll one thunderbolt successively upon all mankind; it is as easy with him to create a perpetual motion of lightning and thunder, as of the sun and stars, and make the world as terrible by the one as it is delightful by the other. He opens not all his store; he sends out a light party to skirmish with men, and puts not in array his whole army. "*He stirs not up all his wrath;*" he doth but pinch, where he might have torn asunder; when he takes away much, he leaves enough to support us. If he had stirred up all his anger, he had taken away all, and our lives to boot. He rakes up but a few sparks, takes but one firebrand to fling upon men, when he might discharge the whole furnace upon them; he sends but a few drops out of the cloud, which he might make to break in the gross, and fall down upon our heads to overwhelm us; he abates much of what he might do.—*Stephen Charnock.*

Verse 39.—"*A wind that passeth away.*"

The secret wheels of hurrying time do give
So short a warning, and so fast they drive,
That I am dead before I seem to live.

And what's a life? a weary pilgrimage,
Whose glory in one day doth fill thy stage
With childhood, manhood, and decrepid age.

And what's a life? the flourishing array
Of the proud summer-meadow, which to-day
Wears her green plush, and is to-morrow hay.

And what's a life? a blast sustained with clothing,
Maintained with food, retained with vile self-loathing,
Then weary of itself, again to nothing.

—*Francis Quarles.*

Verse 40.—"*How oft did they provoke*," etc. They provoked God at least ten times (Num. xiv. 22) during the first two years of their journey through the wilderness: (1) at the Red Sea (Exod. xiv. 11, 12): (2) at the waters of Marah (Exod. xv. 24): (3) in the wilderness of sin (Exod. xvi. 2): (4) when they kept the manna until the following day (Exod. xvi. 10): (5) when the manna was collected on the Sabbath (Exod. xvi. 27): (6) in Rephidim, where there was no water (Num. xx. 2, 13): (7) at Horeb when a molten calf was made (Exod. xxii 1, &c.): (8) at Taberah (Num xi. 1, 2, 3): (9) when they lusted for flesh (Num. xi. 4): (10) when they murmured at the news brought by the men, who had been sent to search the land (Num. xiv. 1, &c.).—*Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 40.—"*How oft.*" God kept an account how oft they provoked him, though they did not, Numb. xiv. 22: "They have tempted me these ten times."—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 41.—"*They turned back.*" As for that expression, וַיָּשׁוּבוּ, which we translate, "*and they turned back*; that is, say some, to go back again into *Egypt*, or as others, returned back to their *old wont* of rebellion; I say, it hath no such meaning here; it is a Hebraism, and should be rendered, "*they returned and tempted*," that is, *sæpius tentaverunt*, they *oftentimes tempted* him, or they *tempted* him *again*.—*Thomas Froysel, in "Sermons concerning Grace and Temptations."* 1678.

Verse 41.—"*Tempted God.*" This only expresses the fact that men act towards him as if he could be tempted, or in a way fitted to put him to the proof, to provoke his righteous displeasure, and make him proceed against them, as it were just for him actually to do because of their offences. It is not in the least degree opposed to the statement of James—"God cannot be tempted with evil," which is to the effect that he cannot be influenced by evil, so as to be drawn into it, turned toward it—so as to feel its power or experience its contamination. He is infinitely far removed from it, raised above it, under all its forms. He is so because of the absolute perfection of his being and blessedness.—*John Adam, in "Exposition of the Epistle of James."* 1867.

Verse 41.—"*Limited the Holy One of Israel.*" They limited either, 1. God's power, as above, verses 19, 20. Or, 2. God's will, directing and prescribing to him what to do, and when, and in what manner; and murmuring at him if he did not always grant their particular and various desires.—*Matthew Pool.*

Verse 41.—"*They limited the Holy One of Israel.*" Here, then, is an awful charge, and mysterious it seems to *us* as awful. How dreadful that man, the worm, should arrogate to himself *that*, to say to him that made him, "*Thus far shalt thou go and no further.*" Amazing, I say, the charge! to contract the dimensions and operations of the Deity. Amazing insolence, to draw a boundary line, beyond which the Creator himself must not pass, to define and prescribe to the Lawgiver of nature himself the pathway of his providence! The turpitude is immense. But we know, my friends, that the crime is not uncommon; and one of the natural results of sin seems to be this,—that the sinful spirit, whether of man or of the lost archangel, unable to shake the firm foundations of the Eternal Throne, *amuses* its malignity, and seeks a temporary cessation from its withering cares, in putting up barriers on the outskirts and frontiers of the Almighty empire, vainly hoping to annoy the Possessor of the throne they cannot disturb.

Affecting words! Do they affect you as they affect me? "*They turned back*

and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel." Somehow, it seems no combination of words could have been so affecting. *They* limited *God.* They limited *the Almighty.* They limited *the Infinite. No!* These words have an awful and affecting surge of meaning in them; for while they describe *Him*, they also convey his relation to us. *They* limited;—*The One;*—the solitary, awful and self-contained Being whose essence is eternity and power; whose self-existence is declared by the amazing marvels of nature; whose life was essential being. They limited *Him—The One* in whose being all being was swallowed up and absorbed—*The One* before whose glance mountains and hills fled away and were not found — *The One* from everlasting, God; *high over all blessed for evermore. The One* to whom all the nations were as the drop of a bucket, and who took up the isles as a very little thing,—Him "*they limited.*"

They had known his character as "*The Holy One;* it was all they knew of his character; but it was surrounded with an awfulness more dread than even the solitary power and self-repose of Deity. In awful words and meanings they had heard his character proclaimed—*The Holy One.* Him they *limited. Him*, whose throne was curtained with the dreadful wings of sinless archangels, crying through the darkness of that ineffable brightness, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! and whose holiness was asserted even by the disorders of the rolling world.

They limited him.—More personal, and therefore more wonderful, became the enormity. The generations of their race had testified for Him, the Holy One of Israel; they had beheld the marvels of his holiness and power in Egypt, in the Red Sea; they had heard of the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; they had heard of him who had spoken to their Captain in the bush burning with fire; they beheld his pillar of fire and cloud; they knew themselves divinely selected and chosen; and him who chose *they limited!* That which should have ensured their faith became only the fountain of their criminality.—*E. Paxton Hood.*

Verse 41.—"*They limited the Holy One of Israel.*" God cannot bear it with patience, that we should *limit him*, either to the time, or manner, or means of help. He complains of the Jews for this presumption, *they limited the Holy One of Israel.* It is insufferable to circumscribe an infinite wisdom and power. He will work, but when he pleases, and how he pleases, and by what instruments he pleases, and if he please, without instruments, and if he please by weak and improbable, by despised and exploded instruments.—*Joseph Caryl, in a "Sermon before the House of Commons," entitled, "The Workes of Ephesus."*

Verse 41.—(*last clause*). This was Israel's sin, and has it not often been ours? Our God is the "Holy One," and will do what is most for His glory; he is the Holy One "*of Israel*," and will therefore consult his people's welfare. We must not limit his *wisdom*, for it is infinite; we must not limit his *power*, for it is omnipotent; we must not limit his *mercy*, for it is as high as heaven and deep as hell; we must not limit him to *time*, for he will display his sovereignty: he will not be tied to walk by our rules, or be bound to keep our time; but he will perform his word, honour our faith, and reward them that diligently seek him.—*James Smith.*

Verse 41.—"*Limited.*" In the only other place where the Hebrew word occurs (Ezra ix. 4), it means to set a mark upon a person, which some suppose here, in the figurative sense of stigmatising or insulting.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 41.—"*Limited the Holy One of Israel*," or *signed* him; signed him with a sign, so the Targum; they tempted him by asking a sign of him, as Jarchi interprets it; insisting that a miracle be wrought, by which it might be known whether the Lord was among them or not, Exod. xvii. 7; with which compare Matt. xv. 1: or they set bounds, so Kimchi, to his power and goodness, saying, this he could do, and the other he could not; see verses 19, 20; and so men limit the Lord when they fix on a blessing they would have, even that, and not another; and the measure of it, to what degree it

should be bestowed on them, as well as the set time when they would have it; whereas the blessing itself, and the degree of it, and the time of giving it, should be all left with the Lord who knows which and what of it is most convenient for us, and when is the best time to bestow it on us.—*John Gill.*

Verse 41.—"*Limited the Holy One of Israel*"—mistrust of God's power to effectuate all his grace, to do what is needed in any case for his people, and carry out his purposes for them. The moment I suppose anything cannot be for blessing, I limit God. This is a great sin—doubly, when we think of all he has done for us The Holy Ghost ever reasons from God's revealed, infinite love to all its consequences. He reconciled; surely he will save to the end. He did not spare his Son; how shall he not give all things?—*J. N. Darby.*

Verse 42.—"*They remembered not his hand,*" etc. God hates forgetfulness of his blessings. First, because he has commanded that we should not forget them, Deut. iv. 9; and viii. 14. Secondly, because forgetfulness is a sign of contempt. Thirdly, it is the peculiarity of singular carelessness. Fourthly, it springs from unbelief. Fifthly, it is the greatest mark of ingratitude.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 42.—"*They remembered not his hand,*" etc. The rallying point of faith in time of trial is *the primary manifestation of grace.* To an Israelite a remembrance of the deliverance from Egypt is the test of active faith. In like manner, to the tried believer now it is the Cross that furnishes the outlet of deliverance from the misty darkness with which Satan sometimes is permitted to envelope our conscience, when the Lord has not been kept watchfully before our face. Because Israel forgot that first deliverance, they went on frowardly in the way of evil. Because a Christian sometimes stops short of the Cross in his spiritual conflicts, he fails to defeat the enemy and remains unfruitful and unhappy, until by some special intervention of the great Restorer, he is again brought, in spirit, to that place where God first met him, and welcomed him in Jesus in the fulness of forgiveness and of peace. No intermediate experience, how truthful soever in its character, will meet his case. It is at the cross alone that we regain a thorough right-mindedness about ourselves as well as about God. If we would glorify him, we must "hold fast the *beginning* of our confidence stedfast unto the end," Heb. iii. 14.—*Arthur Pridham.*

Verse 42.—"*They remembered not his hand,*" etc. Eaten bread is soon forgotten. *Nihil citius senescit quam gratia.* Nothing so soon grows stale as a favour.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 43.—"*Zoan,*" or *San,* seems to have been one of the principal capitals, or royal abodes, of the Pharaohs (Isaiah xix. 11, 13; xxx. 4): and accordingly "*the field of Zoan,*" or the fine alluvial plain around the city, is described as the scene of the marvellous works which God wrought in the time of Moses.—*John Kitto.*

Verses 43—51.—Moses wrought wonders destructive, Christ wonders preservative; he turned water into blood, Christ water into wine; he brought flies and frogs and locusts and caterpillars, destroying the fruits of the earth, and annoying it; Christ increased a little of these fruits, five loaves and a few fishes, by blessing them, so that he herewith fed five thousand men: Moses smote both men and cattle with hail, and thunder and lightning, that they died, Christ made some alive that were dead, and saved from death the diseased and sick; Moses was an instrument to bring all manner of wrath and evil angels amongst them, Christ cast out devils and did all manner of good, giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, limbs to the lame, and cleansing to the leper, and when the sea was tempestuous appeasing it; Moses slew their first-born, thus causing an horrible cry in all the land of Egypt; Christ saveth all the first-born, or by saving makes them so; for thus they are called, Heb. xii. 23.—*John Mayer.*

Verse 44.—"*Turned their rivers into blood*," etc. This displays also the folly of creature worship. Pharaoh adores the life-sustaining power of nature, as embodied in the majestic river before him. The God of nature transforms the running water into a river of death before his eyes. It demonstrates, in the way that was most striking to the Hebrew and the Egyptian, that the God of Israel was the true and only God of heaven and earth, and that all other objects of worship were but the creatures of God or the works of men's hands.—*James G. Murphy.*

Verse 44.—"*Turned their river into blood*," etc. They looked upon their river not only as consecrated to a deity; but, if we may believe some authors, as their chief national god; and worshipped it accordingly. . . . . They must have felt the utmost astonishment and horror, when they beheld their sacred stream changed and polluted, and the divinity whom they worshipped so shamefully soiled and debased. And these appearances must have had a salutary effect upon the Israelites; as they were hence warned not to accede to this species of idolatry; but to have it ever in contempt, as well as abhorrence.

It is to be observed, that God might, if it had been the divine pleasure, have many different ways tainted and polluted the streams of Egypt. But he thought proper to change it to blood. Now the Egyptians, and especially their priests, were particularly nice and delicate in their outward habit and rites; and there was nothing which they abhorred more than blood, they seldom admitted any bloody sacrifices; and with the least stain of gore they would have thought themselves deeply polluted. Their affectation of purity was so great that they could not bear to come within contact with a foreigner, or even to handle his clothes; but to touch a dead body was an abomination, and required to be immediately expiated . . . . On these accounts the priests were continually making ablutions. There were four stated times, twice in the day, and as often in the night, at which they were all obliged to bathe themselves. Many accidents caused them to repeat it much oftener. Hence this evil brought upon them must have been severely felt, as "there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt," Exod. vii. 21.—*Jacob Bryant* (1715—1804), *in* "*Observations upon the Plagues inflicted upon the Egyptians.*"

Verse 44.—"*And their floods, that they could not drink.*" A third calamity accompanying this plague was the impossibility of drinking the water of the Nile, a vexation the keener felt by them, because the water of the Nile, after having been purified from the slime by a kind of almond-dough is, on the one hand, most agreeable, tasteful and healthy, so that it appears to strangers almost as an artificially prepared drink—whence the Egyptian proverb originated: "the water of the Nile is as sweet as honey and sugar," and the adage, "that if Mohammed had drank of it, he would have besought God to be immortal, that he might always enjoy it; and it is, on the other hand, the *only* drinkable water which the inhabitants can possibly use; for, says Maillet (I. p. 20): "The well and cistern-water in Egypt is detestable and unwholesome; fountains are so rare, that they are a kind of prodigy in that country; and, as to rain-water, that is out of the question, as scarcely any rain falls in Egypt."—*M. M. Kalisch, in* "*A Historical and Critical Commentary on the Old Testament.*" 1867.

Verse 45.—"*Flies.*" [Exodus viii. 13, 14. עָרֹב or עֵרֹב]. It is a matter of difficulty precisely to determine the species or kind of animals denoted by that expression; but so much is certain: 1. That they must be a very small kind of insects, as they are represented to arise from the grains of dust; 2. That they are noxious both to man and beasts (ver. 13.) and in a still higher degree than the frogs. The singular, עָרֹב, is used in Isaiah li. 6, where it represents something very frail, weak, and perishable. The etymology leads to the Greek root, κνάω, to *gnaw* or pinch—and this coincides with the English noun *gnats*, with which, indeed, all the qualities just mentioned perfectly agree. And the Septuagint, which is naturally of great authority in all matters concerning

the natural phenomena of Egypt, its home, translates also σκνῖφες (musquito gnats); which Philo, likewise an Egyptian, describes thus: "It is an insect although of very small size, yet of a most troublesome nature; for it hurts not only the surface, causing intolerable and protracted itching, but penetrates also into the interior through the ears and noses. It flies even into the eyes of those who do not guard themselves, and produces pain." All which qualities are perfectly applicable to gnats.—*M. M. Kalisch.*

Verse 45.—"*He sent divers sorts of flies.*" "I will send swarms *of flies* upon thee," etc. (Exod. viii. 21.) Heb. עָרֹב, *arob*, *a mixture*, or *mixed swarm*, i.e. probably of flies, wasps, hornets, and other vexatious and stinging insects. It will be observed that "*flies*" in our version, being printed in italics, is not in the original. . . . . the Septuagint renders עָרֹב, *arob*, by κυνόμυιαν, *dog fly*, from its biting, an insect that fastens its teeth so deep in the flesh, and sticks so very close, that it oftentimes makes cattle run mad. . . . . .

"*He sent* (עָרֹב, *arob*) *divers sorts of flies among them which devoured them.*" The *arob* is described as *devouring* the Egyptians, which is an act which seems inapplicable to a fly. Upon the whole we strongly incline to the opinion which has found some able supporters of late years, that the Egyptian beetle (*blatta Ægyptiaca*) is denoted in this place. The beetle, which is almost everywhere a nuisance, is particularly abundant and offensive in Egypt, and all the circumstances which the Scriptures in different places intimates concerning the *arob*, applies with much accuracy to this species. It devours everything that comes in its way, even clothes, books, and plants, and does not hesitate to inflict severe bites on men. If also we conceive that one object of these plagues was to chasten the Egyptians through their own idols, there is no creature of its class which could be more fitly employed than this insect. What precise place it filled in the religious system of that remarkable people has never, we believe, been exactly determined; but that it occupied a conspicuous place among their sacred creatures seems to be evinced by the fact, that there is scarcely any figure which occurs more frequently in Egyptian sculpture and painting.—*George Bush.*

Verse 45.—"*Flies, which devoured them.*" [See Exodus viii. 24.] "*The land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies.*" Bochart understands by *land, the inhabitants*, whose blood these flies sucked, and left such a poison in it, that their bodies swelled, and many of them died. Le Clere understands it of the flesh and other eatables, which those vermin having preyed upon, and fly-blown, bred maggots, stench, and putrefaction throughout the land.—*Jameson's Critical and Practical Exposition of the Pentateuch.* 1748.

Verse 45.—"*And frogs, which destroyed them.*" Galerius observes, that the Egyptians were punished in this plague upon all the five senses. The sight was punished, that was offended with the multitude, with the greatness, with the hideous form and colour of these frogs. Their hearing was offended with the croaking of them; for it was but harsh music to dainty ears. Their smell was offended with the stench of them. Their taste was offended that they came into their troughs, the places of their dough, and so hindered them of the food that was provided for their nourishment. . . . . "The frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants," (Exod. viii. 4.) So that thou shalt not rid thyself of this annoyance. What! in their meat, and drink; and upon their bodies! Then observe with me, beloved, God can lay judgments upon people, that shall not be more painful, and troublesome, than odious, loathsome and noisome.—*Josias Shute, in "Judgment and Mercy: or the Plague of Frogs* { *inflicted* / *removed.* } *—1645.*"

Verse 45.—"*Frogs.*" The Egyptians suffered most keenly from the infliction. They were a singularly fastidious people, and abhorred the contact of anything that they held to be unclean. We may well realise, therefore, the effect of a visitation of frogs, which rendered their houses unclean by entering

them, and themselves unclean by leaping upon them; which deprived them of rest by getting on their beds, and of food by crawling into their ovens and upon the dough in the kneading-troughs. And, as if to make the visitation still worse, when the plague was removed, the frogs died in the places into which they had intruded, so that the Egyptians were obliged to clear their houses of the dead carcases, and to pile them up in heaps, to be dried by the sun, or eaten by birds and other scavengers of the East. As to the species of frog which thus invaded the houses of the Egyptians, there is no doubt whatever. It can be but the *green*, or *edible frog* (*Rana esculenta*), which is so well known for the delicacy of its flesh. This is believed to be the only aquatic frog of Egypt, and therefore must be the species which came out of the river into the houses. Both in Egypt and Palestine it exists in very great numbers, swarming in every marshy place, and inhabiting the pools in such numbers that the water can scarcely be seen for the frogs. Thus the multitudes of the frogs which invaded the Egyptians was no matter of wonder, the only miraculous element being that the reptiles were simultaneously directed to the houses, and their simultaneous death when the plague was taken away.—*J. G. Wood.*

Verse 45.—"*Frogs.*" The rod is lifted up again. Behold, that Nilus, which they had before adored, was never so beneficial as it is now troublesome; yielding them not only a dead, but a living annoyance: it never did so store them with fish as it now plagues them with frogs. Whatsoever any man makes his god, besides the true one, shall be one day his tormentor. Those loathsome creatures leave their own element to punish them which rebelliously detained Israel from their own. No bed, no table, can be free from them: their dainty ladies cannot keep them out of their bosoms; neither can the Egyptians sooner open their mouths than they are ready to creep into their throats, as if they would tell them, that they came on purpose to revenge the wrongs of their Maker.—*Joseph Hall.*

Verse 46.—"*Caterpiller.*" חָסִיל, *chasil*, is rendered βροῦχος by the LXX, in 2 Chron. vi. 28, and by Aquila here, and also by the Vulgate in Chron. and in Isai. xxxiii. 4, and it is rendered by Jerome here, *bruchus*, "the chaffer," which everyone knows to be a great devourer of the leaves of trees. The Syriac in Joel i. 4, ii. 25, renders it צרצורא *tzartzooro*, which Michaelis, from the Arabic צרצר *tsartzar*, a cricket, interprets the *mole-cricket*, which, in its grub state, is also very destructive to corn, grass, and other vegetables, by cankering the roots on which it feeds.—*Editorial Note to Calvin in loc.*

Verse 46.—"*Caterpiller.*" In former times, any destructive, crawling creature occurring in cultivated places was thus called; now, by general consent, we restrict the term to the second stage of insects of the Lepidopterous order, namely, butterflies and moths. These caterpillers, by the voracity with which they attack the leaves, the fruit, and sometimes the solid wood of plants and trees, are made conspicuous even to those who are little acquainted with natural history.—"*Biblical Treasury.*"

Verse 46.—"*Locust.*" Their quantity is incredible to all who have not themselves witnessed their astonishing numbers; the whole earth is covered with them for the space of several leagues. The noise they make in browsing on the trees and herbage may be heard at a great distance, and resembles that of an army plundering in secret. The Tartars themselves are a less destructive enemy than these little animals. One would imagine that fire had followed their progress. Wherever their myriads spread, the verdure of the country disappears; trees and plants stripped of their leaves and reduced to their naked boughs and stems, cause the dreary image of winter to succeed in an instant to the rich scenery of spring. When these clouds of locusts take their flight, to surmount any obstacles, or to traverse more rapidly a desert soil, the heavens may literally be said to be obscured with them.—*F. C., Comte de Volney.*

Verse 47.—"*He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with*

frost." The grape vine for the rich, and the sycamore fig for the poor, were cut off by the just judgment of God upon the nation.—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 47.—The sycomore (not sycamore, for this is altogether different, though, in consequence of a typographical error, often confounded with it in our Bibles) was the name of a tree, common in Egypt, Amos vii. 14; Luke xix. 4 This tree resembled the mulberry in its leaves, and the fig in its fruit; and on its produce the inferior ranks of people, for the most part, lived. The psalmist refers to but one sort, still he clearly means every kind, of valuable tree.—*William Keatinge Clay.*

Verse 49.—"*By sending evil angels.*" Evils come uncalled, but not unsent. Are they not here called "*angels*"? they are sent; the word *angel* means a messenger. Not things only without life, but not living creatures neither, brute, nor men, nor Satan's self can hurt unless God bid. The three days' darkness in Egypt, how came it? "He sent darkness," saith David. Psalm cv. 28. So the hail, thunder, and lightning, the Lord sent them, saith Moses. The frogs, flies, lice, grasshoppers, and caterpillars, that infected Egypt and the lions that slew the idolators in Samaria (2 Kings xvii.), the text saith of them all, *Dominus immisit*, the Lord sent them. And for men—"Am I come" (said Rabshakeh) "without the Lord?" He bade me go. Yea, the devil, the arch-evil-angel, who seeks to devour, yet must be *sent* ere he can do ought. The lying spirit in the mouths of the false prophets longed to seduce Ahab; God must first bid; *Egredere*, go forth, and do so. The use of this is easy without my help: not to fear, doing well; not man, fiend, any creature, can hurt you, God not sending them. But sinning, to fear everything. The weakest creature can quell the mightiest man, if God bid, go. A mouse (saith the poet) will bite a wicked man. Be it proud Herod, great Antiochus; if God but ask the creatures, *Quem mittam*, which of you shall I send? the worm will answer, *Ecce me*, send me; I will devour him. And such poor, silly, despicable creatures are some of these "*evil angels*" in my text. "*He sent:*" what sent he? "*evil angels*," the next thing in this Scripture.

"*Evil angels?*" *Par dispar*, a pair of words which seem not well matched. The latter may say to the former, *Quid mihi et tibi*, what have I to do with thee? Angels were the best and holiest of God's creatures. They all were good, very good, Moses saith; but angels *κατ' ἐξοχην*, excellently good. Then is "*evil*" here an evil epithet for angels. And is never read but here, and here (some think) not well translated. But the phrase of "*evil angels*" hath other meaning here: *evil angels*, *i.e.*, the angels, *i.e.*, the messengers of evil. It is in the Hebrew, not מלאכים, but מלאכי; insomuch that some expositors think the psalmist means the words of Moses and Aaron; that they were sent from God to be the messengers of evil, *i.e.*, of all the plagues that God would bring on Egypt. That sense I censure not, but follow not. The Greek Fathers have another—that by the "*evil angels*" are meant the *evil spirits*. Christ calls them angels too, the devil's angels. Augustine likes not that sense. The most current exposition is as a Jewish writer speaks: the "evil angels" are the ten several plagues.—*Richard Clerke.* (—1634.)

Verse 49.—"*By sending evil angels among them.*" That the devil and his angels are so very evil, that for them everlasting fire is prepared, no believer is ignorant: but that there should be sent by means of them an infliction from the Lord God upon certain whom he judgeth to be deserving of this punishment, seemeth to be a hard thing to those who are little prone to consider how the perfect justice of God doth use well even evil things. For these indeed, as far as regardeth their substance, what other person but himself hath made? But evil he hath not made them; yet he doth use them, inasmuch as he is good, conveniently and justly; just as on the other hand unrighteous men do use his good creatures in evil manner: God therefore doth use evil angels not only to punish evil men, as in the case of all those concerning whom the Psalm doth speak, as

in the case of king Ahab, whom a spirit of lying by the will of God did beguile, in order that he might fall in war; but also to prove and make manifest good men, as he did in the case of Job.—*Augustine.*

Verse 50.—"*He made a way to his anger.*" Literally—"weighed a way:" implying that God, in punishing the Egyptians so severely, did nothing but what was just and equitable, when *weighed* in the balance of right. Prov. iv. 26. —*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 50.—"*He made a way to his anger.*" As if the psalmist had said, If there were not "*a way*" for his anger, that is, for the execution of his anger, *he forced* his way; though he did not find a way, yet he "*made*" one, and fought himself through all difficulties which seemed to oppose the destruction of his enemies. We put in the margin, "*he weighed a path,*" he made the path as exact as if he had put it into a balance; the way was fitted to the largeness of his own anger, and 'twas fitted to the dimensions of their wickedness. Thus "*he made a way to his anger,*" both by suiting the way to his anger and by removing all impediments out of the way of his anger. If God will work to save, who shall let it? and if God will work to destroy, who or what shall let it?—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 51.—"*The chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham.*" The sun of the last day of the sojourn of Israel in Egypt had set. It was the fourth day after the interview with Moses. Pharaoh, his princes, and the priests of his idols would doubtless take courage from this unwonted delay. Jehovah and his ministers are beaten at length, for now the gods of Egypt prevail against them. The triumph would be celebrated in pomps and sacrifices, in feasts and dances. Nothing is more likely than that the banquet halls of Pharaoh at Rameses were blazing with lamps, and that he and his princes were pouring forth libations of wine to their gods, and concerting schemes amid their revelry, for the perpetuation of the thraldom of Israel. . . . . Pharaoh Sethos started from his couch that night yelling in fierce and bitter agony, and gnawing at the sharp arrow that was rankling in his vitals, like a wounded lion. His son, his first-born, his only son, just arrived at man's estate, just crowned king of Egypt, and associated with his father in the cares of sovereignty, writhed before him in mortal throes, and died. His transports of grief were re-echoed, and with no feigned voice, by the princes, the councillors, and the priests that partook of his revelry. Each one rends his garments and clasps to his bosom the quivering corpse of his first-born son. On that fearful night "there was a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt," but if we have rightly read its history, the loudest, wildest wail of remorseful anguish would arise from Pharaoh's banquet hall!—*William Osburn, in "Israel in Egypt."* 1856.

Verse 52.—"*But made his own people to go forth like sheep.*" It is not said that they went forth like sheep; but that he made them go forth like sheep. It is not a description of the character of the people, but a commendation of the providence and goodness of God, by which, after the manner of a good shepherd, he led forth from Egypt his own people with all security, like sheep snatched from the midst of wolves.—*Musculus.*

Verse 53.—"*They feared not.*" First, they had no cause for fear, *at their departure from Egypt.* Though they saw the Egyptians slain, yet against them not even a dog moved its tongue. 2. They were all in sound health. 3. They were enriched with the spoils of the Egyptians. 4. They went forth a great multitude. 5. They supplied themselves with arms. Secondly, *they feared not to enter the Red Sea,* for the fear started by the approach of Pharaoh was swiftly suppressed. Thirdly, *they feared not to wander in the desert* for forty years, God going before his pillar. Fourthly, *they feared not, though enemies attacked them.*—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 54.—"*He brought them to the border of his sanctuary,*" or *holiness*; that is, to the holy land; so called in divers respects, but especially because of his sanctuary, the place of his residence; to which he makes all the land to be but as bounds and limits, because of the eminency of that place, the holiness whereof did, as it were, spread to all other parts of the land, as if the whole had been a sanctuary, and consecrated ground. It is therefore to the honour of the whole land, as well as of the sanctuary, that he calleth it "*the holy border,*" a "*border of his sanctuary.*"—*Westminster Assembly's Annotations.*

Verse 57.—"*They were turned aside like a deceitful bow.*" The eastern bow, which when at rest is in the form of a ☾, must be *recurved*, or *turned the contrary way*, in order to be what is called *bent* and *strung*. If a person who is unskilful or weak attempt to *recurve* and string one of these bows, if he take not great heed it will spring back and regain its quiescent position, and perhaps break his arm. And sometimes I have known it, when bent, to *start aside*, and regain its quiescent position, to my no small danger, and in one or two cases to my injury. This image is frequently used in the sacred writings: but no person has understood it, not being acquainted with the eastern *bow* ☾, which must be *recurved* or bent the contrary way ⌒, in order to be proper for use. If not well made, they will fly back in discharging the arrow. It is said of the *bow* of Jonathan, "*it turned not back,*" 2 Samuel i. 22, לֹא נָשׁוֹג אָחוֹר, *lo nasog achor*, "did not twist itself backward." It was a good bow, one on which he could depend. Hosea, chap. vii. 16, compares the unfaithful Israelites to a "*deceitful bow;*" one that, when bent, would suddenly start aside and recover its former position. We may find the same passage in Jer. ix. 3. And this is precisely the kind of bow mentioned by *Homer*, Odyss. xxi., which none of Penelope's suitors could bend, called καμπύλα τόξα and ἀγκύλα τόξα, the *crooked bow*, in the state of rest; but τόξον παλίντονον, the *recurved bow* when prepared for use. And of his trial of *strength* and *skill* in the bending of the bow of Ulysses, none of the critics and commentators have been able to make anything, because they knew not the instrument in question. On the τόξου θησις of Homer I have written a dissertation elsewhere. The image is very correct; these Israelites, when brought out of their natural bent, soon recoiled, and relapsed into their former state.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 57.—"*Starting aside like a broken bow*" (English Prayer Book): but if a bow breaks, it will not start aside, for the elasticity which should make it start aside will be destroyed.—*Stephen Street.*

Verse 57.—"*They were turned aside like a deceitful bow.*" When the bow is unbent the rift it hath may be undiscerned, but go to use it by drawing the arrow to the head, and it flies in pieces; thus doth a false heart when put to the trial. As the ape in the fable, drest like a man, when nuts are thrown before her, cannot then dissemble her nature any longer, but shows herself an ape indeed; a false heart betrays itself before it is aware, when a fair occasion is presented for its lust; whereas sincerity keeps the soul pure in the face of temptation.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 57.—The fourth thing is *the deceitful bow*, קֶשֶׁת רְמִיָּה, a slack or warping bow *arcus doli vel dolosus seu fallax* (Hebrew) will be sure to deceive the archer that shoots in it; 'twill turn back into belly, as the archer's phrase is; and though he level both his eye and his arrow never so directly to the mark and think confidently with himself to hit it; yet, in the event, the arrow, through the warping of the bow, flies a quite contrary way, yea, and sometimes reflects upon the archer himself. *Non semper feriet, quodcunque minabitur arcus*, the bow smites not all it threatens, and the ill-fashioned or casting bow will turn in the shooter's hand, and send the arrow sometimes one way and sometimes another way; yea, and sometimes it rebounds into his own sides; or if it be a rotten bow (though otherwise fair to look upon), when an arrow is drawn to the head it breaks in the hand, and deceives the archer.

The same thing happeneth when the string of the bow is naughty, and breaks when the arrow is drawn. This is no less than a divine Scripture allegory. Behold, such a fallacious, warping, and rotten bow is man's deceitful heart; his purposes and promises are the arrows that he puts upon the string, the mark he aims at is repentance, to the which (in affliction especially) he looketh with an accurate and intent eye, as though he would repent indeed; but, alas! his heart deceives him, as being unsound in God's statutes, Psalm cxix. 80; and hence it is that his promises and pretences do fall at his foot, or vanish in the air as smoke. Thus a *deceiving*, as well as a *deceived*, heart, turns him aside, Isaiah xliv. 20, as it did those false Israelites: oh, then, look to the secret warpings of your own heart, and seeing you are God's bow, you must be bent by him, and stand bent for him, Zech. ix. 13; thereby you shall be like Jonathan's bow that "never returned empty," 2 Samuel i. 22.—*Christopher Ness, in "A Chrystal Mirrour."* 1679.

Verses 57—59.—Not to be settled in the faith, is provoking to God. To espouse the truth, and then to fall away, brings an ill report upon the gospel, which will not go unpunished. "*They turned back, and dealt unfaithfully. When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel.*" The apostate drops as a windfall into the devil's mouth.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 58.—"*High places.*" Or, altars, chapels, and such like places, to celebrate divine service in, out of the only place which was by him consecrated, and was alone acceptable unto him; or peradventure also dedicated to idols; and were so called, because that they chose out the choicest hills and hillocks for those purposes.—*John Diodati.*

Verse 59.—"*When God heard this.*" The psalmist represents the noise of the ill deeds of the people ascending to the ears of the Eternal.—*Armand de Mestral, in "Commentaire sur le Livre de Psaumes."* 1856.

Verse 60.—It is a heathenish delusion and false confidence to suppose that God is bound to any place or spot, as the Trojans thought because they had the temple of Pallas in their city it could not be taken, and in the present day the manner of the Papists is to bind Christ to Rome and the chair of Peter, and then defiantly maintain "I shall never be moved" (Ps. x. 6). For, they say, the ship of Peter may sink a little, but not altogether. Then the only point that is deficient is this, that they are not the ship of Peter, but rather an East Indiaman with a cargo of Indian apes and such like foreign merchandize, pearls, purple, silk, brass, iron, silver, gold, incense, lead, that they may carry on simony and make merchandize of religion, and deceive the whole world (Rev. xviii. 11—24).—*Johann Andreas Cramer.* 1723—1788.

Verse 61.—"*And delivered his strength into captivity*," etc. He calls the ark the *strength of God*, not because the virtue of God was shut up therein, or was so bound to it that he could not, unless through it, be powerful and strong: but because his presence, whose symbol the ark was, had always revealed its virtue and might to Israel, in the perpetual defence and various deliverances of that people. After the same manner he calls it the beauty or glory of God, because God by his own presence declared his glory among the people, and desired that it should be conspicuous by this external symbol.—*Mollerus.*

Verse 63.—"*The fire consumed their young men.*" "*Fire*" here may be regarded as an image of destructive war, as in Num. xxi. 28. "For there is a fire gone out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon: it hath consumed Ar of Moab," &c.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 63 (*first clause*).—When religion is overthrown among God's people, let not the commonwealth think to stand: when God gave his glory unto the

enemies' hand, "He gave his people over also unto the sword, and *the fire consumed their young men.*"—*David Dickson.*

Verse 63.—"*Not given to marriage.*" "*Not praised:*" *viz.* they had not been honoured with nuptial songs according to the customs of those times see Jer. vii. 34; xvi. 9; xxv. 10. The meaning is, they had not been honourably married, because men were grown scarce by reason of the wars, Isai. iv. 1; Jer. xxxi. 22. Or, they had been married without any solemnity, like poor bond-women; or privately, as in the time of public calamities.—*John Diodati.*

Verse 64.—"*Their widows made no lamentation.*" This implies the extent of the destruction, and is full of meaning to one who has been in an Oriental city, during a plague or other devastating calamity. At first the cry of wailing, which always follows a death in ordinary circumstances, is loud and frequent: but such cries do not increase, but subside, with the increase of the calamity and desolation. Death becomes a familiar object in every house; and every one, absorbed in his own losses, has little sympathy to spare for others. Hence the loudest lamentations cease to be noticed, or to draw condoling friends to the house of mourning; and therefore, as well as from the stupefaction of feeling which scenes of continued horror never fail to produce, a new death is received in silence, or only with sighs and tears. In fact, all the usual observances are suspended. The dead are carried out and buried without mourning ceremonies, and without the presence of surviving friends, by men who make it an employment to take away the dead, on the backs of mules or asses, from the homes they leave desolate. We have seen this.—*Kitto's "Pictorial Bible."* 1856.

Verse 64.—"*Their widows made no lamentation.*" The meaning is, either 1. That being overwhelmed with sorrow they could not weep; or, 2. That being in captivity amongst the Philistines they were not suffered to lament the death of their husbands; or 3. That dying with grief, they lived not to make any lamentations for them at their funerals; or 4. That they were so taken up and oppressed with their own miseries, and especially with the miseries of the church and people of God in general, that they had not leisure to bewail their husbands; of both which last we have a clear instance in the wife of Phinehas in particular, 1 Sam. iv. 19, 20, who dying, made no mention of her husband.—*Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 64.—The daughter-in-law of Eli when she was at once travailing, and in that travail dying, to make up the full sum of God's judgment upon that wicked house, as one insensible of the death of her father, of her husband, of herself, in comparison of this loss, calls her (then unseasonable) son Ichabod, and with her last breath says, "The glory is departed from Israel, the ark is taken."—*Joseph Hall.*

Verse 65.—"*Then the Lord awaked.*" Know how to understand this and similar passages in Scripture, as to the Lord's sleeping and forgetting his people, Ps. xiii. 1; xliv. 33; lxxvii. 9. These are not to be understood as to an universal and absolute forgetting and sleep of providence; for God hath not his vacation time. he still holds the reins of government in his hand, all the world over. Neither do they infer an absolute cessation of providence in reference to that object-matter which the Lord to our apprehension seems to forget, and lies dormant; for there is a promoting-work of providence, which we see not, and are not so sensible of for the present, as hath been shewed. Besides, such forgetting and sleep of providence, as it is such, bespeaks the beauty of providence in the way of bringing things to pass. It is so far from inferring an *interregnum*, or letting fall the reins of government, as that it is a glorious demonstration that God orders matters, and that wisely, whilst he seems to forget, and be as one asleep. As the night, a night, fills under the providence of God as well as the day, for there are the ordinances of heaven for the night season, Jer. xxxi. 35; so the dark night, when as to matter the Lord seems to

sleep, is part and parcel of his all-wise model of government. The seventy years' captivity was a long night of the church's distress; and yet thus it must be according to the ordinance of providence. Jer. xxix. 10.—*Thomas Crane.*

Verse 65.—"*Like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine:*" whose spirit and courage is revived and inflamed by a liberal draught of generous wine; which comparison is no more injurious to the Divine Majesty than that of a thief's coming in the night, to which Christ's second coming is compared, 1 Thess. v. 2.—*Matthew Pool.*

Verse 66.—"*He smote his enemies in the hinder parts.*" This has reference to the Philistines being smitten with hemorrhoids, or piles, whilst the ark was retained a captive by them, 1 Sam. v. 6, 12. . . . . The Greek version, as quoted by Suidas, is, *he smote his enemies on the back parts of the seat;* signifying, he says, a disease modestly expressed.—*John Gill.*

Verse 67.—The moving of the ark is not the removing of it; Shiloh has lost it, but Israel has not. God will have a church in the world, and a kingdom among men, though this or that place may have its candlestick removed; nay, the rejection of Shiloh is the election of Sion.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verses 67, 68.—"*Refused.*" "*Chose not.*" "*Chose.*" As God's love is set out to us, as not independently pitched, but as having all the persons in his eye and having them all in view; so by this also, that he hath not pitched it upon everybody. This is distinct from the former; for an indefinite is not knowing whom he pitched it upon. Now, as he knew whom he pitched upon, so he hath pitched but upon some, not on every one. . . . If God would love, it was fit he should be free. It is a strange thing that you will not allow God that which kings and princes have the prerogative of, and you will allow it them. They will have favourites whom they will love, and will not love others; and yet men will not allow God that liberty, but he must either love all mankind, or he must be cruel and unjust. The specialness of his love greateneth it, endeareth it to us. You shall find almost all along the Bible, that when God would express his love, he doth it with a speciality to his own elect, which he illustrates by the contrary done to others. . . . And you shall find frequently in the Scripture, when he mentioneth his choice of some persons, he holdeth up likewise on purpose his refusing of others. . . . When he speaks of an election out of the tribes, he contents not himself to say he chose Judah, but he puts in the rejection, the preterition at least, of Joseph. "*He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved.*" . . . He speaks of the times of the judges. The rejection of the ten tribes began to show itself soon; he says, he refused the tabernacle of Ephraim, but he chose Judah. After Solomon's time, they fell to worshipping of calves (let me tell you, it is the declining of election that undoes a nation, when election grows low, and ceases in an age), till at last the ten tribes were cast off, as they are at this day; but the tribe of Judah had election among them. . . .

Though at the first, and for a long time, both were alike his people, yet at last election began to pass a discrimination. Ephraim, or the ten tribes, had at first the advantage of Judah in spirituals; for the ark, the token of God's presence, was committed unto their keeping at Shiloh; the seal of God's worship and ordinances was entrusted to them, and Judah must come up thither, if they would seek the Lord. But Ephraim, for their sinning against that worship, forfeited and lost it, and should therefore have the keeping of it no longer, no, not for ever any more; but Judah had it at Bethlehem, till at last it was fixedly seated in Sion, as "the earth is established" (ver. 69); and this for no other reason than that he had loved them, and out of love had chosen them (ver. 67—69). For otherwise Judah was, as well as Ephraim, alike involved in the same guilt of sin which had forfeited it, as ver. 56—60 of the

Psalm plainly shew. "*Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies*," etc. He speaks it of the whole in those verses, and yet takes the occasion against Ephraim to remove it for ever. Thus, the first are last, and the last first; and those whom God's presence is with for a while, upon some eminent sin God begins to withdraw from them, and by degrees, as he did by that people of the ten tribes, till at last he cast them off from being a people; but dealt not so with Judah, though these made a forfeiture of their temple, and worship, and nation, in the captivity of Babylon, yet God restored all again to greater glory at last. The ground was that in verse 68, "*Zion which he loved*."—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 70. "*He took him from the sheepfolds.*" The art of feeding cattle, and the art of ruling men are sisters, saith Basil.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 71.—"*From following the ewes great with young.*" A good and steady lamber is of great value to a grazier, but I would advise all graziers to attend to this operation themselves, as few servants will be found to pay that attention which is necessary, or which a master himself would do, and the slightest neglect is, in many cases, followed with the greatest disadvantage. I have attended to the practice of lambing for several years, therefore, trust I am not a novice in it, or incompetent to give a description of it. Many lambs may be lost without its being possible to charge the lamber with neglect or ignorance, though greater attention on his part might have saved many that otherwise perish. . . . . The practice of lambing is at times very intricate, and is apt to exhaust the patience of a lamber. Sheep are obstinate, and lambing presents a scene of confusion, disorder, and trouble, which it is the lamber's business to rectify, and for which he ought always to be prepared: some of the ewes perhaps leave their lambs, or the lambs get intermixed, and the ewes which have lost their lambs run about bleating, while others want assistance. These are only a few of the various occurrences which call for the immediate attention of the lamber.—*Daniel Price, in "A System of Sheep-grazing and Management."* 1808

Verse 71.—"*From following the ewes great with young.*" It hath been reported that a learned doctor of Oxford hung up his leathern breeches in his study for a memorial to visitors of his mean original; the truth I avouch not, but history tells us of Agathocles who arose from a potter to be king of Sicily, and would be served in no other plate at his table but earthenware, to mind him of his former drudgery. 'Twere well if some would remember whose shoes they have cleaned, whose coals they have carried, and whose money they have borrowed, and deal gratefully with their creditors, as the good Lord Cromwell did by the Florentine merchant in the time of Henry the Eighth, when Wolsey* like a butcher forgot the king his master. 'Twas otherwise with holy David, who being in kingly dignity, graciously calls to mind his following the ewes great with young, when now feeding the sheep of Israel. His golden sceptre points at his wooden hook, and he plays the old lessons of his oaten pipe upon his Algum harp, and spreads his Bethlehem tent within his marble palace on Mount Zion.—*Samuel Lee.*

Verse 71.—"*To feed Jacob his people.*"† Observe, a good shepherd must be humble and faithful, he ought to have bread in a wallet, a dog by a string, a staff with a rod, and a tuneful horn. The bread is the word of God, the wallet is the memory of the word; the dog is zeal, wherewith the shepherd glows for the house of God, casts out the wolves with pious barking, following preaching and unwearied prayer: the string by which the dog is held is the moderation of zeal, and discretion, whereby the zeal of the shepherd is tempered by the

* Foxe's Martyrology.

† This is a curious specimen of mediæval spiritualising, and is here inserted as such. It is amusing to note that a Tractarian expositor quotes the passage with evidently intense admiration.

spirit of piety and knowledge. The staff is the consolation of pious exhortation by which the too timid are sustained and refreshed, lest they fail in the time of tribulation; but the rod is the authority and power by which the turbulent are restrained. The tuneful horn, which sounds so sweetly, signifies the sweetness of eternal blessedness, which the faithful shepherd gently and often instils into the ears of his flock.—*Johannes Paulus Palanterius.* 1600.

Verse 72.—In spite of his transgressions, which he always bitterly repented of, and which were therefore blotted out of the Book of God, he remains to all princes and rulers of the earth as the noblest pattern. In perfect inward truth he knew and felt himself to be "*King by the grace of God.*" The crown and sceptre he bore merely in trust from the King of all kings; and to his latest breath he endeavoured with all his earnestness to be found as a genuine theocratic king, who in everything must conduct his earthly government according to the ordinances and directions of God. Therefore the Lord made all that he took in hand prosper, and nothing was clearer to the people than that the Lord was *truly with the king.—Frederick William Krummacher, in "David, the King of Israel."* 1867.

HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER.

Verse 1.—The duty of attending to God's word. Modes of neglecting the duty; ways of fulfilment; reasons for obedience; evils of inattention.

Verse 2 (*first clause*).—Preach on the "Parable of the Prodigal Nation," as given in the whole Psalm.—*C. A. Davies, of Chesterfield.*

Verses 2, 3.—I. Truths are none the worse for being old: "sayings of old." "Old wood," says Lord Bacon, "is best to burn; old books are best to read; and old friends are best to trust." II. Truths are none the worse for being concealed under metaphors: "I will open," etc., "in a parable;" "dark sayings." 1. They lead to more research. 2. They become eventually better known. III. Truths are none the worse for being often repeated. 1. They are more tested. 2. They are better testified.—*G. R.*

Verse 3.—The connection between what we have "heard," and what we have personally "known" in religion.

Verse 4.—A good resolution, and a blessed result.—*C. D.*

Verse 4.—I. What is to be made known? "The praises of the Lord;" "his strength and his wonderful works." II. To whom are they to be made known? "To the generations to come." III. By whom? Parents—one generation to another. IV. How made known? 1. By hiding nothing 2. By declaring everything God has done.—*G. R.*

Verse 5.—Scriptural tradition, or the heirloom of the gospel.

Verses 5—8.—Family religion. I. The fathers' knowledge the children's heritage—verses 5, 6. II. The fathers' fall the children's preservation—verses 7, 8.—*C. D.*

Verses 5—8.—I. Truth once started can never be arrested—verses 5, 6. II. Truth received binds the soul to God—verse 7. III. Truth rejected lights up beacons for others—verse 8.—*C. D.*

Verse 6.—Care for the rising generation and for future posterity.

Verse 7.—Practical philosophy. I. Fix your hope wisely. II. Store the memory richly. III. So shall you guide the actions obediently.

Verses 7, 8.—On the deceitfulness of the heart, in disregarding providential dispensations in general.—*John Jamieson's "Sermons on the Heart,"* I. 430.

Verse 8.—Stubbornness not steadfastness, or the difference between a natural vice and a gracious quality.

Verse 8.—The false heart (*middle clause*), with its left hand, "Stubbornness in the wrong" (*first clause*), and its right hand, "Fickleness in the right" (*last clause*).—*C. D.*

Verse 9.—Who were they? What had they? What did they? When did they do it?

Verses 9, 67.—The backsliding of prominent believers. I. The Lord's soldiers: who they were; belonged to God's chosen people; were distinguished by grace. Gen. xlviii. 17—20. Strong by God's blessing. Deut. xxxiii. 17. Honourable place among their brethren. Favoured with the tabernacle at Shiloh—verse 60. II. Their equipment: armour defensive and offensive; like that of others who triumphed. III. Their behaviour in battle: to turn back was traitorous, cowardly, dangerous, disastrous, dishonourable. IV. Their punishment—verse 57. Deprived of their special honour. Rev iii. 11.—*C. D.*

Verses 10, 11.—The gradations of sin: neglecting, rejecting, forgetting God.—*C. D.*

Verses 12—16.—God revealed in his deeds. The wonder-working God—verses 12—16. The avenging God—verse 12. The interposing God—verse 13. The guiding God—verse 14. The Father-God—verses 14—16.—*C. D.*

Verses 12—17.—Obstinacy of unbelief. It makes head against God's majesty—verse 17; his gracious providence—verses 14—16; his interposing care—verse 13; his avenging justice—verse 12; his distinguishing grace—verses 12—16.—*C. D.*

Verses 12—17.—Prodigies cannot convert the soul. Luke xvi. 31.—*C. D.*

Verse 14.—The adaptations of God: a beautiful theme.—*C. D.*

Verse 14.—I. Direction. II. Protection. III. Refreshment.—*R. P. Buddicom.*

Verse 14.—The Lord guides his people by being, I. Their shade in prosperity, cooling and calming. II. Their light in adversity, cheering and warming.

Verses 15, 16.—Divine supplies seasonable, plentiful, of the best, marvellous.

Verse 16.—Streams from the Rock Christ Jesus. I. Their source. II. Their variety. III. Their abundance.—*B. Davies, of Greenwich.*

Verse 17.—Sin in its progress feeds upon divine mercies to aid its advance, as also every other surrounding circumstance.

Verses 17—21.—I. They tempted God's patience; verse 17. II. They tempted God's wisdom; verse 18. III. They tempted God's power; verses 19, 20. IV. They tempted God's wrath; verse 21.—*E. G. Gange, of Bristol.*

Verse 18.—"*Meat for their lust.*" In what respects temporal mercies may be so sought, and so become.

Verses 18—21.—The progress of evil. I. They are drawn away by their lust; verse 18. II. Lust having conceived bringeth forth sin: verses 19—20. III. Sin being finished bringeth forth death: verse 21. "Their carcases fell."—*C. D.*

Verse 19.—Unbelief a slander of God.

Verses 21, 22.—Evil consequences of unbelief. I. The sin itself: they doubted the ultimate certainty, completeness, and reality of God's salvation from Egypt. II. The aggravations of it: the object of it was God; they who entertained it were God's people: The aids to faith were overlooked: "though." III. What it led them to; inward sin—verse 18; outward sin—verse 19, etc. IV. What it brought upon them; verse 21. Fiery serpents, etc.—*C. D.*

Verse 22.—Unbelief the mother of sorrows.

Verse 25.—Different kinds of food. Beasts' food, Luke xv. 16. Sinners' food, Hosea iv. 8. Formalists' food, Hosea xii. 1. Saints' food, Jer. xv. 16; John vi. 53—57. Angels' food. Christ's food, John iv. 34.—*C. D.*

Verses 29—31.—Dangerous prayers. When lust dictates, wrath may answer. Let grace dictate, and mercy will answer.—*C. D.*

Verses 34—37.—The hypocrite's feet, verse 34. The hypocrite's memory, verse 35. The hypocrite's tongue, verse 36. The hypocrite's heart, verse 37. Or, the hypocrite's cloak and the hypocrite's heart.—*C. D.*

Verse 36.—Flattery of God. I. A common sin. II. A hateful sin. III. A dangerous sin.—*B. D.*

Verses 38 (*last clause*) and 50 (*first clause*).—God's anger as exercised against his people and against his foes.—*C. D.*

Verses 39 and 35.—God's memory of his people and their memory of God.

Verse 42.—The day of days. I. The enemy encountered on that day. II. The conflict endured. III. The deliverance accomplished. IV. The joy experienced.—*B. D.*

Verse 45.—The power of little things when commissioned to plague us.

Verse 47 (*last clause*).—Sometimes it will not shoot. Sometimes it will. And when it does it misses the mark.

Verse 52.—I. God has a people in the world. II. He brings them away from others. III. He brings them into fellowship with himself IV. He brings them into fellowship with each other. V. He guides them to their rest.

Verse 55.—Divine supplantings. He supplants the fallen angels in heaven. One nation of earth by another (see all history). The thoughts and affections of the heart in regeneration, &c.—Isaiah lv. 13.—*C. D.*

Verses 56, 57.—On the deceitfulness of the heart, with respect to the performance of duty.—*J. Jamieson.* I. 326.

On the deceitfulness of the heart, with respect to the omission of duty.—*J. Jamieson.* I. 353.

Verses 59—72.—I. A gloomy sunset, verses 59, 60. II. A baleful night, verses 60—64. III. A blessed sunrise, verses 65—72.—*C. D.*

Verse 69.—The builder of the church. Its sanctity. Grandeur. Comprehensiveness (like the earth, Mark xi. 17). . Perpetuity.—*C. D.*

Verses 70, 71.—I. David's calling. Two questions present themselves. 1. How was David's shepherd-life an unconscious preparation for his calling? 2. How did the divine summons, when it came, fit him for his mighty destiny? Observe—he was sent back to his flocks. Nothing could train him more perfectly than that waiting. Two great convictions awakened in him then, that formed in him elements of strength. (1.) The belief in a divine leader (see Ps. xxiii. (2.) The belief in a divine choice. II. Its modern lessons. 1. There is a divine plan in every life. 2. There is a divine vocation for every man. 3. There is a divine Shepherd for every man.—*E. L. Hull.*

Verses 70—72.—Spiritual promotions. I. Analogies between lower and higher service, verse 71. II. Humbler work, a preparation for higher, verses 71, 72. III. Promotion the act of the Divine will, verses 70, 71. IV. Our powers shall be equal to the position to which God promotes us.—*C. D.*

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